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# An Historical Memento





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# In Dedication

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To the Memory of

**IDA B. ALSETH**

**Educator - Journalist**  
**1888 - 1970**

This partial recording of highlights of the history of the Lake Preston community is dedicated to the memory of Ida B. Alseth, the community's best known and most widely circulated author in all its history.

Mrs. Alseth combined the dual roles of educator and journalist, continuing both careers into the ninth decade of an unusually productive life of community service that ended October 9, 1970.

Publication of an historical memento is a highly appropriate vehicle for such a dedication, for one of Ida B's outstanding journalistic attributes was her dedication to research—such as she did 25 years ago in preparing a history for presentation at Lake Preston's Diamond Jubilee.

Busy as a free lance writer for several daily newspapers and also published in nationally known magazines, she spent many days researching records, old newspaper files and interviewed many 'old timers' to prepare that presentation.

Her outstanding community service, especially in the field of education, was formally honored in 1969 when her portrait was unveiled at a PTA Founders Day program.

At that time the homage and her career were summarized, in the news columns of the Lake Preston Times, as follows:

"Lake Preston has been a better place because Ida B. Alseth lives here.

"That tribute sums up, probably as well as any other, a grateful community's homage to one of its most dedicated citizens.

"She came to Lake Preston as a young bride in 1918—already a teacher with four years experience at Northern State College in Aberdeen.

"Fellow workers responded with tributes to the

determination of a mother of three, widowed during the depression, who saw all three children through college.

"The same sense of purpose dominated a 15-year teaching career in the Lake Preston school, in English classrooms, in declamation coaching and — for four of the 15 years — in the principal's office.

"The demands of a dedicated teacher were accompanied by ability to inspire. During two periods as county superintendent of schools — totaling 15 years — the same attributes of demand and inspiration, transmitted through rural teachers under her direction, helped enrich the education of students throughout the county.

"Tributes summed it up as invaluable in helping youth reach its potential.

"Statewide honors and recognition, as well as educational service that extended into foreign lands, are encompassed in Mrs. Alseth's career. Honored several years ago as South Dakota Mother of the Year, three years ago she received SDSU's Achievement in Education award.

"Statewide service to education included five years on the state board of education and nine years on the board of the state PTA.

"And twice she was selected to render educational service overseas, once to represent the State Department's Instructional Service in Pakistan, and later she spent a year teaching English at a university in Turkey."

We feel it is most fitting that this publication be dedicated to one who used the written word to educate and serve others so well.

**The Publisher**





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# Preface --

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It has been a personal pleasure to collect some of the facts about the history of our community. Being a newcomer to this area, the research has taught me much about pioneer life in the Lake Preston area. Some of the old buildings and landmarks in Lake Preston have come to life for me, for I have studied about their beginnings. It is enjoyable to see some of the old homes in this town and realize that there are still some of the original houses in use. A sense of history has been realized.

It has been my hope that you also will gain an appreciation of the history of Lake Preston as you read through the items in this centennial publication. That is the purpose of this booklet.

I am the first to admit that such research should have been started long ago in order to produce the kind of centennial memento that would do justice to Lake Preston's history. Obviously, the few months that were spent in compiling the materials in this booklet were not enough to adequately tell the story. To read through the volumes of the LAKE PRESTON TIMES is an arduous task, but it should have been done thoroughly in order to tell the story of our town. Time did not permit such a project. How wonderful that the volumes are available to us however, so that in the future (perhaps inspired by this booklet) someone might take up that task and write the history as it should be written.

Time also did not permit interviewing some of our pioneer citizens. Nor could we seek out people for information as we probably should have. Undoubtedly the family section of this booklet will omit many families that rightfully should have been included; instead, we could only print up those histories that were voluntarily submitted. We wish to thank all those who took the time to contribute to this publication.

In doing the limited research that I did, I was pleased to discover the fine historical work that had already been accomplished in the past. The Senior Civic

Club is to be commended for the fine tape recording they compiled a few years ago, and which is on file at the public library for future use. Some of that tape was fortunately available in script form, and the excellent historical survey by Mrs. Gorden (Hazel) Maxam, as well as some personal recollections by pioneer families, is included in this booklet.

The publications made for Lake Preston High School Alumni gatherings through the years also contain a wealth of information, especially concerning the history of our schools. This history has not been reprinted here, due to its length; but the booklets are readily available around Lake Preston and will serve as an historical help for future projects.

In short, as I did some research I found that much of my work had already been done ably in the past. My contribution to the Lake Preston Centennial observance is to compile such past research, family histories, and share with you my own introductory historical survey, written from the perspective of a person who has only lived in Lake Preston for the last five years.

Since there will no doubt be some errors in this, I suggest that corrections be submitted so that future work may be done more precisely.

Lake Preston has had a colorful, interesting, and commendable history. We can be proud of this place, and we ought to be thankful for those who have through the years made it what it is—a fine and friendly place to live. It is for us now in the present and future to build on the foundation given to us by the pioneers of this area that we might make it an even better place for tomorrow.

I wish to express my thanks to members of the Excelsior Club, especially Mrs. Wendell (Helen) Nelson and Mrs. Gordon (Lorrie) Mydland, for their help in obtaining some of the information for the family section of this booklet.

William R. Lewis  
Centennial Historical Chairman

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# Centennial Worship Service

## PRELUDE

Martha Sorenson, Pianist

## WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP:

Pastor S. Thomas Mitchell

Leader: O Lord, You have always been our home.

Congregation: Before You created the hills or brought the world into being, You were eternally God, and will be God forever.

L: My life is like the evening shadows; I am like dry grass.

C: But You, O Lord, are King forever; all generations will remember You.

L: Write down for the coming generation what the Lord has done,

C: so that people not yet born will praise Him.

L: The Lord looked down from His holy place on high;

C: He looked down from heaven to earth.

L: To Him who by means of His power working in us is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of:

C: To God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever! Amen.

(Good News Bible, Psalm 90:1, 2; Psalm 102:11, 12, 18, 19; Ephesians 3:20, 21)

## OPENING HYMN: "Rock of Ages"

1. Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee;  
Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy riven side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure:  
Cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.

2. Not the labors of my hands  
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone;  
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

3. Nothing in my hand I bring;  
Simply to Thy cross I cling.  
Naked, come to Thee for dress;  
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly;  
Wash me Savior, or I die.

4. While I draw this fleeting breath,  
When mine eyelids close in death,  
When I soar to worlds unknown,  
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,  
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE DAY

Genesis 12:1-7 (Pastor Ada Blick)

2 Timothy 2:3-12 (Pastor Mildred Horton)

Matthew 28:16-20 (Pastor Philip Peterson)

## HYMN: "Bringing in the Sheaves"

1. Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of kindness,  
Sowing in the noontide and the dewy eve;  
Waiting for the harvest, and the time of reaping,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

Chorus:

Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves;  
Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

2. Sowing in the sunshine, sowing in the shadows,  
Fearing neither clouds nor winter's chilling breeze;

By and by the harvest and the labor ended,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.  
(Chorus)

3. Going forth with weeping, sowing for the Master,  
Tho' the loss sustained our spirit often grieves;  
When our weeping's over, He will bid us welcome,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.  
(Chorus)

## HYMN: "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms"

1. What a fellowship, what a joy divine, Leaning on the everlasting arms:

What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Chorus:

Leaning, leaning, Safe and secure from all alarms;  
Leaning, leaning, Leaning on the everlasting arms.

2. Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms;  
Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.  
(Chorus)

3. What have I to dread, what have I to fear,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms?  
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms. (Chorus)

## REMEMBERING OUR PAST (Pastor William Lewis)

### HYMN: "A Mighty fortress"

1. A mighty fortress is our God,  
A bulwark never failing;  
Our helper He amid the flood  
Of mortal ills prevailing:  
For still our ancient foe  
Doth seek to work us woe;  
His craft and power are great,  
And, armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal.

(Continued on Next Page)





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2. Did we in our own strength confide  
Our striving would be losing;  
Were not the right Man on our side,  
The Man of God's own choosing.  
Dost ask who that may be?  
Christ Jesus, it is He;  
Lord Sabaoth His Name,  
From age to age the same,  
And He must win the battle.

CENTENNIAL ADDRESS AND MEDITATION:  
Former Governor Sigurd Anderson

OFFERING: MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION SEXTET  
SINGING DURING THE OFFERING

The loose offering will go to the Ministerial Association, especially to help pay for today's commemorative service bulletin.  
Your regular church offerings, if in your regular envelopes, will get back to your church.

OFFERING RESPONSE SONG: Doxology

CLOSING PRAYERS (Pastor Mitchell and Pastor Peterson)  
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name,  
Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as  
as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin  
against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from  
evil.  
For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are  
Yours, now and forever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: "The Old Rugged Cross"

1. On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,  
The emblem of suffering and shame;  
And I love that old cross where the dearest and  
best  
For a world of lost sinners was slain.  
Chorus:  
So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,  
Till my trophies at last I lay down;  
I will cling to the old rugged cross,  
And exchange it some day for a crown.
2. To the old rugged cross I will ever be true,  
Its same and reproach gladly bear;  
Then He'll call me some day to my home far away,  
Where His glory forever I'll share. (Chorus)

HONORING OUR PIONEER CITIZENS:  
Pastor William Lewis





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# Assembly of God

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The Lake Preston assemblies of God Church had its beginning in March 1935 when Rev. B. E. Galyen and his mother started holding services in the old G.A.R. Hall on Main Street. Those who were among the first to attend the meetings were: Mr. and Mrs. Freeman Olson, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Olson, Mrs. Ole T. Olson, Arlet Olson, Kalma Thompson, and Nellie Laughlin.

The congregation grew and in March 1937 voted to affiliate with the Assemblies of God with headquarters in Springfield, Mo. On March 29, the church was set in order by Rev. A. F. Berg, Superintendent of the S.D. District. At this time the Constitution and By-laws were adopted.

The G.A.R. Hall was rented until it was purchased by the church in late 1938. The building was remodeled in 1947-48 and new seats were purchased. In 1949 the church name was changed from the Lake Preston Gospel Tabernacle to the Lake Preston Assembly of God.

One of the ministers serving the church 1939-41 went as a missionary to South America where he and his wife have ministered for many years; they were Rev. and Mrs. Henry Mock. Another, Rev. Farrel Evans, resigned from the church in July 1934 to receive an appointment as Chaplain in the United States Army.

On July 24, 1950 a fire started in the Kingsbury County Farmers Union next door to the south and in a few minutes time the church was also on fire. What is now referred to as the worst fire in the history of Lake Preston occurred when the fire swept through the station to three large storage tanks consuming 20,000

gallons of gasoline and fuel oil along with the church located directly north of the station.

Eight Fire Departments battled the blaze for seven hours to protect the surrounding buildings. The new seats, piano, etc., were removed from the church by the aid of volunteers to be used later in the church structure erected at 103 Spring Avenue South. Among the volunteers were ministers from the section having a welcome picnic supper in the park for the new pastors, Rev. and Mrs. W. H. Rudnik, who had arrived a little over a week previously.

Though the fire was a shock to the members and new pastors, they immediately began plans for erecting a new church. Rev. and Mrs. Rudnik worked untiringly along with others in the construction of the new building capable of seating 150 people.

The congregation had services in the Legion Hall until Sunday, Dec. 10, 1950 when the first service was held in the basement of the church using the new seats and piano rescued from the old church.

Dec. 15th marked the laying of the cornerstone ceremony and on Wednesday, June 20, 1951, the new Assemblies of God church was dedicated to God for the preaching and teaching of the Word of the Lord.

At this time grateful thanks were expressed to business men and many others who volunteered donations of money, labor and materials.

The congregation is presently being pastored by Miss Mildred E. Horton and Miss Ada Blick, ordained ministers of the Assemblies of God.





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# Lake Preston Lutheran Church

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People of the Lutheran faith began to settle in the Lake Preston community from its beginning. In the early days various Lutheran synods sought to extend their mission work to the pioneers of this area. On March 13, 1887, St. Petri Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized (in later years the name eventually became Lake Preston Lutheran Church). The organizational meeting was held in the school house. Fifteen names with their families were affixed to the Constitution as charter members. On September 28, 1887, the congregation called its first pastor, the Rev. Lauretz Thoreson, a recent seminary graduate. A salary of \$100 a year was approved.

The congregation had no church building during its first five years. Meetings were held in private homes, the school house, or the Methodist Church when it was available. At a meeting held January 21, 1891, it was voted to launch a building project. The plans eventually approved a building forty feet by twenty-six feet, being sixteen feet high, with a chancel sixteen by twelve. March 13, 1892, was the first time this building was used. It was dedicated in early 1899 after the steeple was finished and the church bell was installed. This building also served another congregation (of the Hauge Synod) for about sixteen years.

In 1908 another building project saw an addition twenty-four by forty feet added. Including the price of the lot, this addition cost \$4,624.02. It was dedicated on November 22, 1908, when the congregation also added the first pipe organ in Kingsbury County.

The congregation had a strong Scandinavian background, and for many years services were conducted in Norwegian. During the ministry of Pastor E. C. Eid, it was decided that all regular services should be in English. No Norwegian services have been held since 1939. Through the years, while still retaining some of its Scandinavian heritage, the congregation has developed into a truly American congregation, with a good mixture of many nationalities.

Lake Preston's Lutheran church was located at the corner of 2nd St. NE and Lake Ave. No., just east of the present United Methodist Church, until 1970. In 1945 the steeple of this church building was hit by lightning, damaging the steeple so badly that it had to be taken down.

On April 17, 1970, the congregation held its first worship service in a new church building at the corner of 3rd St. SE and Spring Ave. So. A parsonage had been built at that corner in 1954. Years prior to that the parsonage had been the present parsonage of the rural Lutheran parish, inasmuch as Lake Preston and North Preston Lutheran Churches were a parish for many years.

The new church building was the result of a building program begun at a meeting on March 24, 1963. The building was dedicated on July 12, 1970, having cost some over \$160,000 with an estimated 6000 hours of volunteer labor from the members.

This congregation has had relatively few pastors over its 92 year history. They have been: Lauretz Thoreson, 1887-1894; Niels A. Stubkjaer, 1894-1904; W. B. Dahl, 1905-12; Christen M. Westermoe, 1913-22; Edward C. Eid, 1922-49; Eldon H. Lyso, 1949-54; Arthur H. Johnshoy, 1954-1967; Leroy Iseminger, 1968-1973; William R. Lewis, 1974-. The congregation now has a baptized membership of approximately 450, with about 370 confirmed members, in approximately 185 households. It is a congregation of the American Lutheran Church.

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# Lake Preston Rural Parish

## NORTH PRESTON LUTHERAN CHURCH

The early Scandinavian pioneers of the Lutheran faith who settled in this part of Kingsbury County held their first religious services in the various homes. The first effort to organize a Christian congregation took place at the Lake Preston Post Office, using it as a chapel, on June 10, 1880. Its membership extended to Lake Preston, Hetland, and the North Preston Communities. Rev. J. C. Jacobson of Volga, S. D., conducted the services. This congregation did not become permanent and was discontinued in 1883.

New settlers were fast moving in and there seemed to be a need for separate congregations for the different communities.

On January 16, 1883, the North Preston Norwegian Lutheran Congregation, Kingsbury County, Dakota Territory, was organized at a business meeting held at Nils B. Knutson's farm home. Rev. B. L. Hageboe, then pastor at Brookings, was called to serve the congregation once a month for a year. Forty-two dollars were subscribed by those present towards the pastor's salary.

The first North Preston Church built in 1892 was struck by lightning and it burned to the ground in 1928. Pastor Eid called the congregation together. They gathered on the church lawn beside the smoking ruins and there with heavy hearts and tearful eyes but faith and hope, they voted to build a new church. It was completed in 1929 except for the basement. The church was dedicated June 30, 1929.

Pastors who have served the church are the following: Rev. W. B. Dahl, Rev. Stubkjaer, Rev. C. M. Westermoe, Rev. E. C. Eid, Rev. E. L. Lyso, Rev. David Lee, Rev. Johnshoy, Rev. Enock Hall, Rev. E. W. Brandt, Rev. Gene Eidsness, Rev. Philip Peterson.



## LAKE WHITEWOOD LUTHERAN CHURCH

The rural Lake Whitewood Lutheran Church was among the first churches to be organized in this area.

Hardy immigrants of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois moved into this community to establish homes and churches. The Scandinavian people were accustomed to religious services in the Homeland so they started planning for these things here.

Lay preachers traveled through the community once a month. In September 1879 Pastor Erick Ruste was installed and served Granite Falls, Lake Benton, Watertown, Madison, Volga and Medary.

In 1884 plans were made to call a pastor and build a parsonage. Five acres of ground were purchased from Gunder Bergerson for \$40 on which a parsonage was erected at a cost of \$485. The church building was built in 1893. It was indeed a happy day when the congregation could gather for the first time in their own place of worship. Rev. Christian Munson served, Rev. L. O. Sunde, Rev. O. M. Severseike, Rev. A. H. Holm, Rev. E. J. Haanstad.

North Preston and Lake Whitewood joined together as a parish in 1954 and called Rev. David Lee, Rev. Enock Hall, Rev. E. W. Brandt, Rev. Gene Eidsness and the present Pastor Philip Peterson, having all served our congregation.



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# St. Ann's Roman Catholic

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St. Ann Parish was organized in 1886, with 27 families, 22 of whom were German. Holy Mass was offered occasionally by Missionaries. In 1907 Holy Mass was offered in the G.A.R. Hall, by Rev. P. J. Cafferky. A Catholic church was built that same year.

The following Priests have served the parish:

1908-1910 — Rev. P. J. Cafferky, with missions in Oldham and Willow Lake.

1910-1916 — Rev. Hugh Fox, Arlington added as a Mission.

1916-1918 — Rev. W. F. Parke, with same Missions. 15 Catholic families.

1918-1930 — Attended by the Oldham Pastor.

1930-1952 — Attended by the De Smet Pastor.

In 1952 the church was closed and the people were asked to attend either De Smet or Arlington Parish.

The Parish house was north of the Ralph Bode residence, and was sold to Frank Kazmerzak in 1952. A few years later the Church was sold to Bob Kopperud.

In 1973, Rev. Joseph E. Murphy became pastor of St. Thomas Parish in De Smet, which included 16 Catholic families of Lake Preston. CCD classes were held in the homes of the teachers, and Father Murphy occasionally said Mass in the Bode home.

There are approximately 20 Catholic families residing in the Lake Preston community in 1979. Father Leonard Kayser has been Pastor of the De Smet-Lake Preston parish since 1976.





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# United Church of Christ

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The history of the church is, in a way, the history of the community itself. The years have not always been kind to her, but she has not only persevered, but has grown more aware of her role through learning and changing that adversity often brings.

The Lake Preston United Church of Christ will soon be celebrating her centennial, having been formed as an outgrowth of the Lake Henry prayer group with a formal charter calling itself the Lake Preston Congregational Church on June 7, 1881. The familiar structure on Main Street of Lake Preston has been used, with many additions and facelifts for more than 90 years.

She has undergone many changes in the years of her growth changing from a small country church to a medium sized town church. Some of the more major renovating and remodeling projects were undertaken in

1910-1911, 1948-49, 1961, and 1977-1978. The majority of the changes have been, for the most part, on the inside of the church so that she would be more functional and better able to do the work which she has been assigned; that work being as a center of worship and a place of Christian Education.

It is hard, indeed, to write the history of a living church. One can point to things, projects, accomplishments of a temporal nature, but one cannot on paper capture the unique spirit that characterizes this building which belongs to the Glory of God. Her history can only be written in the lives of those, past and present, who have found the presence of the living God to be a part of her inner soul, and only then with a quick breath as she continues to be involved in the work of being a part of the voice of a loving God to this community.

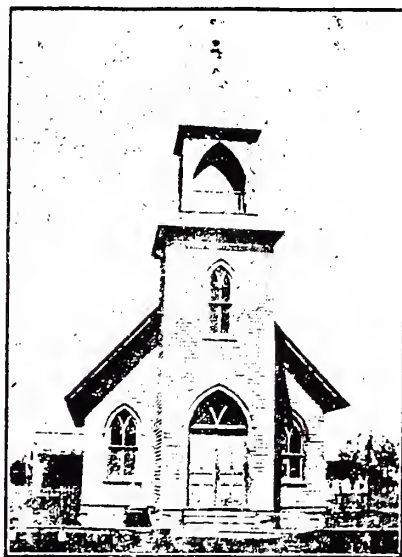




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# United Methodist Church

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The First Methodist  
Church Building  
in Lake Preston

The Lake Preston circuit was formed in April 15, 1889 with the first preaching service held in the De Witt Opera House on April 21, 1889.

In 1908 the old church outgrew itself and in 1909 the present structure was dedicated. For 71 years this new church has had its doors open to regular services and has been a spiritual and moral force for good.

In 1926 the church combined to make a two point charge with De Smet and in recent years has been connected with Arlington.

In recent years much work has been done to improve the structure so that today it is in good condition.

The church continues to be a place where Christ's redeeming love and grace is sought and found; where the people seek to find God's Truth and apply it to their daily living; and where there is warmth and love as we are bound together in Christ.





# An Historical Survey --

By William R. Lewis

Just as most people in this world do not spend their entire lives in the place where they were born, so also Lake Preston could be labelled as a town "on the move." Today it isn't **where** it once was, and it certainly isn't **what** it once was.

It all began in 1879, when a post office was established at the site of a new town, which was near a lake named by the famous explorer of the American west, General John C. Fremont, the "pathfinder." When Fremont came into this area in 1839, the lakes he found were not like they are today. Today the lakes of this area have become shallow marsh-like areas of reeds and grasses, ideal for many types of waterfowl and wildlife, but not normally what we think of as lakes. In dry years the lake bottoms have been farmed and roads went right across them; in years when there is more moisture, the lakes fill up some, and farms retreat to higher ground. But when John C. Fremont came upon this body of water stretching perhaps eight or nine miles, it was a formidable lake. Farming is said to have brought about the siltation which filled up the lakes, making them shallow. When this area was a prairie grassland, the lakes were also deeper, containing more water.

General Fremont named this lake after William Campbell Preston, a senator from South Carolina. While some books list Senator Preston as from North Carolina, they are incorrect. I discovered the history of Senator Preston by contacting the South Carolina capitol, and elsewhere in this booklet you will find some details about the man for whom Lake Preston was named.

Forty years after Fremont named the lake, settlers were coming to the area, and a town was begun. Some say the town first had the name Fremont, but the post office established was called Preston. The first town was located about a mile east of the present town's location, nearer the lakeshore. A general mercantile store and a drug store were built at the Preston townsite. Then the railroad located its tracks away from the townsite, and

hence Preston (or Fremont) became a town "on the move." The Lewis Bros. store was moved to the new location in 1881. The new townsite had been laid out in July, 1881, on 120 acres of land which was donated to the representatives of the railway by settlers in the vicinity.

T. H. Maguire erected the first building in August and September of 1881. In October Francis Starling built the Starling House. The town was "on the move" in terms of growth now. It was incorporated in 1881, but the name was changed to Lake Preston, in order to avoid confusion with the town of Preston, Minnesota. In November of 1881 a new post office building was built, with H. O. Omsdalen as the postmaster.

An early description of Lake Preston's location states: "It is perhaps the most picturesque in its surroundings of any town in the county, and, in the sporting season, must be the headquarters of hunters and fishermen. A short distance to the southeast lies the fine sheet of water called Whitewood Lake, having about the same area as Lake Preston and furnishing equally as good sporting in the season. Three miles southwest of the place is the grand lake of the Whole group, Lake Thompson, covering an area of about fifteen square miles, or nearly 10,000 acres."

The town had a grain elevator by the fall of 1882, erected by C. W. Seefield, with a capacity of 15,000 bushels. In 1883 the Winona Milling Co. built a large warehouse.

School opened in early September 1882 with 14 pupils and Miss Adelia Lathrop as teacher. In 1882, when the town was reported to have a population of several hundred, Lake Preston built its first school. It was erected at a cost of \$2,500, and was said to be a fine building, measuring 36 feet by 42 feet. The building was located just west of the present Milwaukee Road tracks, and just north of present highway 14. There was no railroad there at the time when they built this school, but when the Milwaukee Road came through Lake Preston, making it a terminus for the two railway lines (the other being the Chicago Northwestern), the tracks



A very early view of the town.





were laid through the schoolyard. The school building was then moved to the block just west of the present school block, where the Preston Motel is today. A quotation from the LAKE PRESTON TIMES of April 6, 1882, during construction of the first school building, rejoices in the fine building it was: "The school house is enclosed. When completed it will be the best school building on the line of this railroad in Dakota, and don't you forget it."

Speaking of the LAKE PRESTON TIMES, this community has indeed been fortunate to have been served by an enterprising community newspaper almost from the day the town was founded. The newspaper was first issued by C. W. Starling on October 20, 1881, just three months after the town at its present site was begun. One historical sketch of South Dakota communities says, in speaking of the LAKE PRESTON TIMES, "It is a handsome paper, well conducted and enjoying a satisfactory patronage."

In early years, the LAKE PRESTON TIMES mentions that various visiting pastors preached here at the depot before they had a church building in the town. But it wasn't long until congregations were formed. The first was the Congregational Church (now the United Church of Christ). The building that stands on Main Street today and which still serves the people of this congregation well was built in 1883 at an expense of \$2,500. That this fine building has been maintained so well through the years speaks, I believe, of the character of the people of Lake Preston.

Soon there were other church buildings, notably the Methodist and Lutheran, and in later years the Roman Catholic (now torn down) and the Assembly of God. The churches of Lake Preston have from the first years of its existence down to the present day served people who have given high priority to Christian faith in their lives.

In 1886 the town had a population of 300. At that

time the assessed valuation of real and personal property in the town was \$72,017.00. Lake Preston was a thriving and growing community.

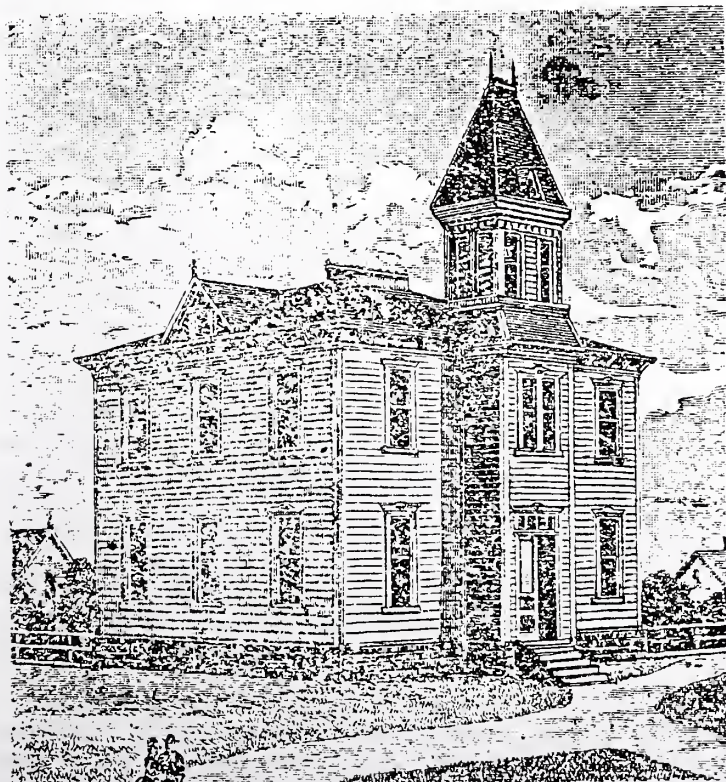
Lake Preston has always been noted as a medical center for the area, and even in 1881 there was a doctor here (I. R. Spooner, M.D.) and a dentist (Dr. A. E. Oviatt). Dr. Spooner, born in 1836 in Plainsville, NY, studied medicine under a doctor in Wisconsin and at a school in Chicago, from which he graduated in 1867. Kingsbury County Dakota Territory, had been created in 1873 and organized in 1879, and named after George W. Kingsbury, historian, legislator, author, and publisher of the Yankton DAILY PRESS AND DAKOTAN. Dr. Spooner came to Kingsbury County in 1879 and to Lake Preston in 1881. Dr. Spooner was a cousin of A. A. Keith, early pioneer pharmacist of Lake Preston. The doctor was a prominent and well-respected citizen of Dakota Territory, and if you go to the state capitol in Pierre you may see his picture there among the members of the first senate in the state. He served as a delegate to the second constitutional convention in Sioux Falls in 1889. After leaving Lake Preston, Dr. Spooner eventually became warden of the State Penitentiary (1889). He died July 27, 1894. His life speaks well of the involvement of this community in providing medical care to the area and of being actively involved in the affairs of territorial and state government.

The newspaper of early years points to a strong temperance movement in this community, led in the early years by Dr. Spooner. Not everyone was opposed to alcoholic beverages, however, and no small controversy resulted when a saloon was established here in 1881 or 1882, known as "The Syndicate Pool." The saloon didn't last long, however, as in the March 23, 1882 issue of the LAKE PRESTON TIMES, there is an amusing and interesting article celebrating the closing of this saloon.

Lake Preston has been a community "on the move" throughout its history, seeking to be as fine a community as it can be. The first high school graduating class, numbering four, graduated in 1905 (making this one of the first schools in the area offering twelve grades). In 1902 the old school building needed to be replaced, even though an addition had been added. When the new building was completed (that which is still serving the community as a grade school), the main part of the old school became a hotel, known as the Park Hotel. It may be hard to believe, but this made it the third hotel for the community, joining Pool's Hotel (which was located where the LAKE PRESTON TIMES building is today, the former Preston Theater) and the Commercial Hotel (which was located where the Ford garage is today). Early settlers tell of the way the hotels used to send buggies down to meet the passenger trains, seeking to attract the many salesmen who came to the town via train.

Lake Preston not only had three hotels in its early years, it also had an opera house (Spear's Opera House), located about where the Masonic Lodge building housing the Preston Cafe and former bakery is today. The opera house burned down when the town was still young.

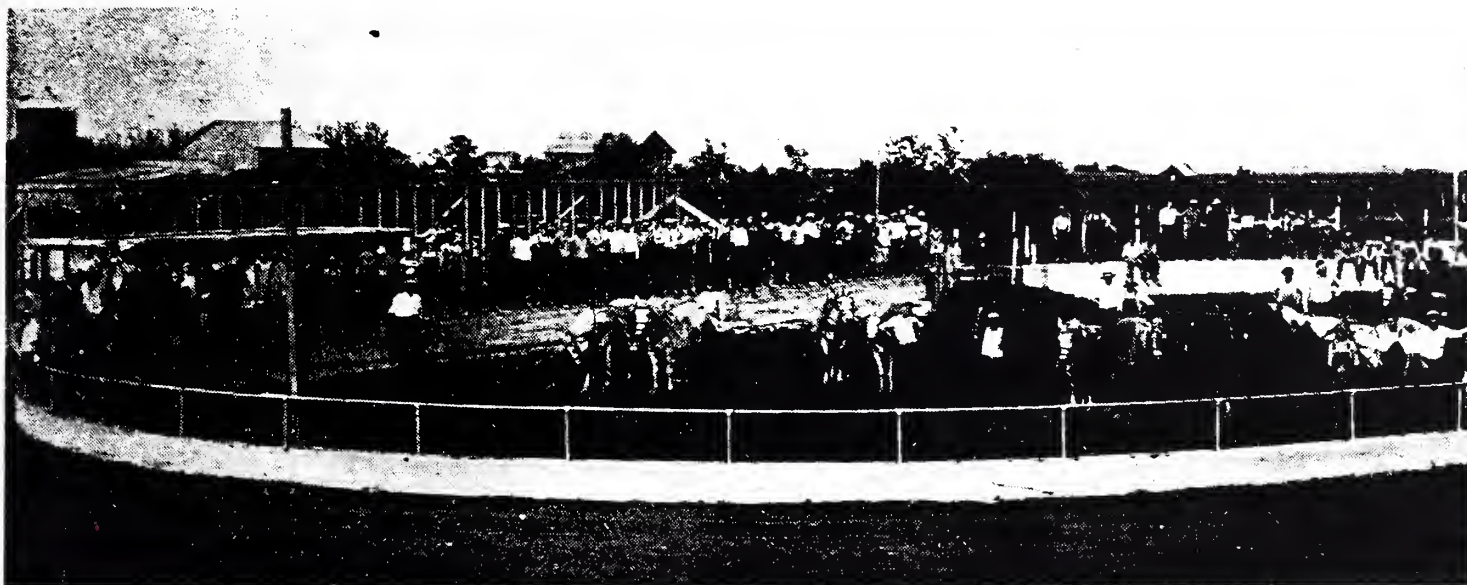
Strolling down Main Street today, one can still see some of the early buildings: for example, the Senior Citizen Center and Spectrum Photography building used to be the Lewis Furniture Store, which also housed the



First School, picture from April 13, 1882, TIMES







undertaker's establishment. Three early bank buildings may still be seen. The Peterman building now serves as Chuck's Grocery. The Keith building is the location of the now closed furniture store. Ida Nelson's Variety Store was one of the early hardware stores. The quonset type structure known as Don's Fixit Shop was once N. C. Nasland's Tailer Shop. Some of the homes along Main Street, especially those near the United Church of Christ, were there almost from the town's beginning. The town had four elevators, two on the Milwaukee line, two on the Northwestern. Lake Preston even had a pop bottling factory (Pleck's) and a flour mill (Ostroot, which later was a power plant, one of the earliest in the area, and is today part of the Otter Tail Power Co. facility). There was a harness shop (J. S. Larson), a machine shop (Julius Christianson), a millinery shop (Edith Remington), a jewelry store and clock repair (N. R. Giles), a meat market (E. A. Hoberg and Berge, later Peter Larsen, then LeRoy Koch), several grocery stores (C. H. Beck and later Ing Beck, Scofield, C. J. Brow), a barber shop (Look's), a beauty shop (Sigrud Scowell), a real estate office (Anderson), a livery stable, a shoe repair shop (Nelson), a novelty shop (Starling), another furniture store (Nels Matson), several lumber yards (Wright's, L. S. Brooks, Botsford), a drug store, a G.A.R. Hall, and the newspaper office. (Much of this information was provided by Myrtle Kelly, and may reflect later businesses; but I mention them to suggest the many business that lined Main Street even in the early years; Lake Preston was a very busy little town, as is evident from some of the pictures of the early town and its many buildings.)

Notable projects through the years have been the building of the first swimming pool in this area (1926), one which is still used today (again speaking of the character of Lake Preston's people in maintaining facilities so well); a new high school (1929); the Kingsbury Memorial Hospital (1948); the fine city park with all its facilities (named after Otto Thorsness); the Kingsbury Memorial Manor (1959); and the new Kingsbury County Memorial Hospital (1975).

In 1939 Lake Preston was mentioned as having a population of slightly over one thousand people. Forty years later, at a time when many small towns have seen their populations decline rapidly, Lake Preston still has a

population not far from the thousand mark. It has continued to be a progressive community seeking to be an attractive place for people to live, providing necessary services for the surrounding area. Still "on the move" to attract new people and receive them in a friendly way, Lake Preston moves into its second century with much the same spirit and drive which characterized the early pioneers of this area.

#### Footnotes:

- 1 Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve, Ed., *SOUTH DAKOTA GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES* (Sioux Falls, SD, 1973), p. 75.
- 2 *A SOUTH DAKOTA GUIDE* (Pierre, SD), p. 248
- 3 Donald Dean Parker, *HISTORY OF OUR COUNTY AND STATE* (Brookings, SD, 1960), p. 7-K.
- 4 Sneve, p. 75.
- 5 *LAKE PRESTON TIMES* (Lake Preston, SD), 11-17-81.
- 6 Parker.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 7-K.
- 8 *LP TIMES*, 9-14-82.
- 9 Parker, p. 8-K.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 7-K.
- 11 *LP TIMES*, 4-6-82.
- 12 Parker, p. 7-K.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 7-K.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 10-K.
- 15 *Ibid.*, preface.

#### Bibliography:

- Hawk, Virginia Driving Hawk, Ed. *SOUTH DAKOTA GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES*. Sioux Falls, SD: Brevet Press, 1973.
- Parker, Donald Dean. *HISTORY OF OUR COUNTY AND STATE*. Brookings, SD: South Dakota State College, 1960.
- A SOUTH DAKOTA GUIDE*. Pierre, SD: South Dakota Guide Commission (A WPA Project), 1938.
- LAKE PRESTON TIMES*, Lake Preston, SD.





# Town History --

Compiled by the Sr. Civic Club in the early 1970's

By Mrs. Gorden Maxam

The village of Preston was established in 1880, 1½ miles east of the site of the present town of Lake Preston. It was located at that point by the Chicago & Northwestern Railway, and named for the lake on the shores of which it was located. The lake was named by General Fremont in honor of Senator Preston of South Carolina.

The general store of Knute Lewis & Bros. was the first business to be established there.

About a year later, when it was decided to move the village to its present site, the Lewis Bros. moved their building here, and during the first 2 years built 2 additions to it. They carried a complete stock of Dry Goods, Clothing, Groceries, Notions, Crockery and Glassware, according to their ad in the Lake Preston Times.

The Post Office was also located in the store until later in the year when Postmaster H. O. Omdalen built a building to house it.

During its first year, the village boasted a doctor, I. R. Spooner, who doubled as a cattle raiser on a farm he owned nearby and as editor of the Times in the occasional absence of the regular editor.

Lake Preston also had a dentist, Dr. A. E. Oviatt, who also farmed some land belonging to his father-in-law directly north of town. Attorney V. V. Barnes had an office here.

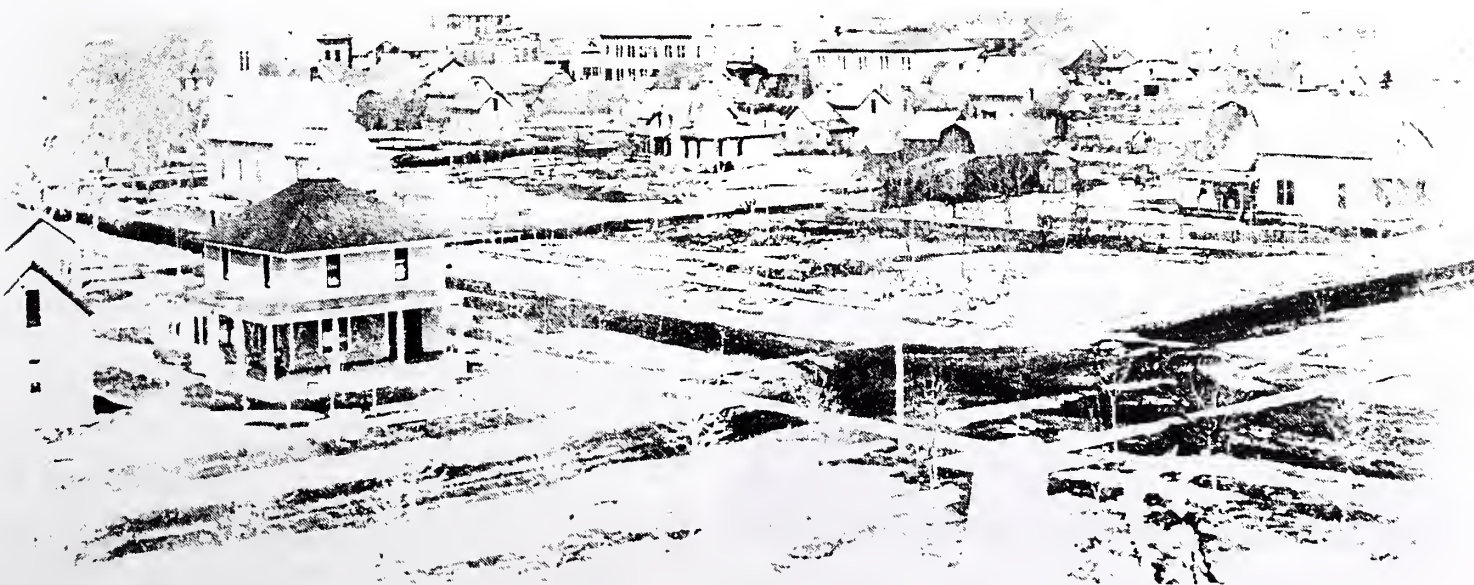
T. H. Maguire had a thriving Hardware and Machinery business; H. M. Thomsen, a nursery, called the Experimental Forest Farm. An elevator was built by C. W. Seefield of St. Charles, Minn., and managed by R. B. Mills; Laird Norton & Co. had a lumberyard, and

Lewis Gerald a drugstore. There were 2 blacksmith shops. F. Starling was the owner of the hotel and also dabbled in Real Estate, Loans, etc. The jeweler was N. R. Giles.

The first issue of the Lake Preston Times was printed Oct. 20, 1881, with C. W. Starling Editor and Publisher, and located in the postoffice building. Although only 1 or 2 of the 4 page spread were locally printed, they were full of news. Quite a few prairie fires were mentioned and a dog fight on Main Street was thought worthy of note. We had a town well and there was agitation for the purchase of a pump. There was much mention of the need for a bridge across Lake Whitewood, and that was finished in 1882 with volunteer labor and opened up some new trade territory. A literary society was organized and a singing school proposed.

The Schoolhouse was built in 1881 and 2, with dimensions 30x41 feet and the first floor divided into 2 rooms, which were all that was needed. It boasted a tower 21 feet high. The village was bonded for \$2,500 for the building which was located west of the present Milwaukee tracks, which were not there at the time. Moved to the site of the Harry Hodges residence in 1886. New brick building in 1903. High School in 1925. Auditorium in 1956.

The Congregational Society held the first religious services probably in the depot. They had no regular pastor for the first year and sometimes a sermon had to be read by a layman, usually Knute Lewis. The Church was built in 1882 at a cost of \$1,600 and still stands as the main part of the present church. The parsonage was built in 1884. A permanent pastor was hired in 1882, Rev. Norton, who organized a Sunday School. However, he was transferred to Pierre, after a few months.



An early view of the town.







An early-day landmark.

volunteer fire department was started with ladders and buckets to be kept handy in case of need. However, in a few years their number was considerably reduced because people borrowed them and forgot to bring them back.

The Merchants Exchange Bank was started in 1884 by G. W. Fifield, an Attorney, and housed in his office till a building was built the following year. It was incorporated January 1888, with a capital of \$20,000.

Knute Lewis built a home in 1885, which is now the Merle Pattee home.

In 1886 there was talk of bonding the county for \$5,000 to build a courthouse in De Smet, with the City of De Smet to put up \$1,000 more. There was much objection to this throughout the county and it lost by 600 votes. Lake Preston's vote was 2-154, which I take to be the cause of the beginning of the De Smet-Lake Preston feud, as in the De Smet News with C. P. Sherwood, Editor, there began to be digs at Lake Preston and answers in the Times.

This was the year the survey was made for the Milwaukee Railroad to be extended north from Madison. It was said, but never confirmed, that De Smet offered the Railroad \$5,000 to run their line through that city, but the survey was already started.

A millinery store was opened by Mrs. Greenleaf.

An entertainment was held to raise money for a bell for the schoolhouse, at which \$35.51 was raised.

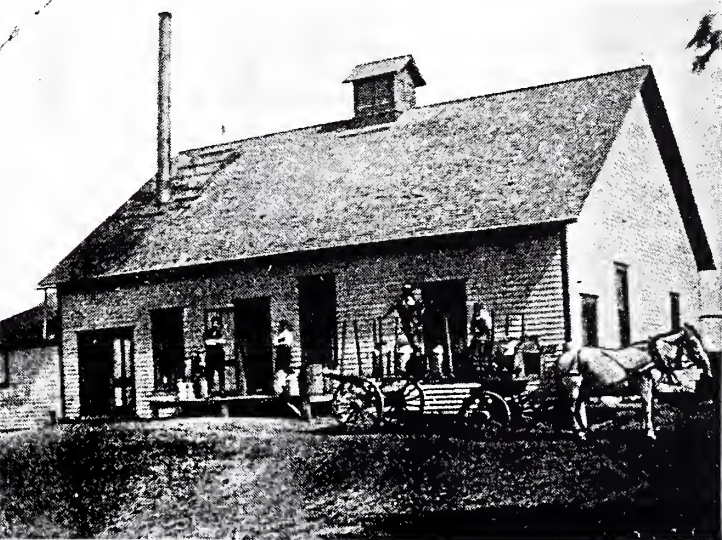
E. G. Ostroot, who was farming north of town, became the manager of the Cargill Elevator built by the new Railroad tracks.

H. I. Olston, who had been a country school teacher, became agent for a branch land and loan office started by a man from Hamlin County.

Land was secured for a cemetery 1½ miles west of town, plowed, leveled, seeded and platted. A. C. Lindner joined the Lewis Bros. in the store, and the Lake Preston Association organized a Building and Loan.

There was talk of a roundhouse on the Milwaukee and a turntable was actually built that fall, as this was the end of the line. However, the next year it was extended on north to Bristol, and presumably the turntable was moved on.

As of this year the population was 300, with no saloon, 1 church, a school building, weekly newspaper,



First Lake Preston creamery and Odden drayline.

The crying needs at the time were a harness shop, a flour mill, a bank, a fire department, cemetery, creamery and opera house.

Several General Stores were soon in business, although there were only 15 residences.

The G.A.R. was organized in 1883, consisting of Civil War veterans, and was very active, holding festivals and dances in some of the public buildings. They later built a hall on the approximate site of the present Legion Hall.

About that time the Keiths came to town, A. A. and his 2 sons. Charles didn't stay very long, I. A. became a druggist. A. A. built a house west of the schoolhouse, and a few years later I. A. built west of his father's house, which I would guess is the house presently owned by Harley Rauch. I. A. was the father of Bert Keith, who owned a men's clothing store and became mayor in the 30s.

Temperance was the burning issue of the times, and each year an election was held to decide whether saloons be allowed in the village. The proposal lost each time for many years, and there was only 1 saloon in the county.

In 1883, L. J. Bates bought the Lake Preston Times from C. W. Starling, and continued as its editor and publisher until his death in 1929, after which his widow, Martha bought the present building and carried on, at first alone, and then with the help of Managing Editors, Claude Davison, C. E. Davison and Lou Eastwood.

In 1941 she sold the plant to E. W. (Jack) Thompson, who published it for 8 years, selling to K. E. Sheimo in 1949. In 1956 Sheimo sold to John and Alice Sittner, the present owners and publishers.

The Times has always been an influence for good in the community and has stood solidly behind its citizens in any project for the betterment of our town. Otto Julson was linotype operator for 40 years, retiring in 1949.

The first restaurant was opened in 1884 in the front part of the Starling Hotel. It was soon followed by one by Austin Berge. The first dressmaking shop was by Anna and Bertha Peterson.

There was agitation for a creamery to be built directly south of the schoolhouse, which would put it on the banks of the slough south of the Highway. A

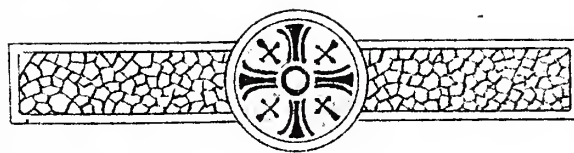
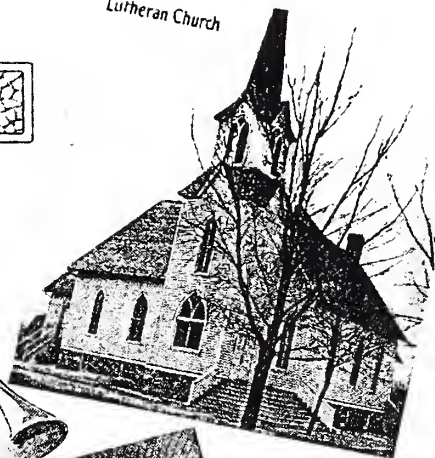




Congregational Church

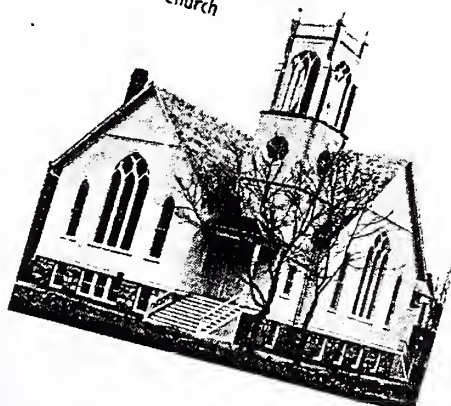


Lutheran Church



## CHURCHES LAKE PRESTON, S. DAK.

M. E. Church



Interior Catholic Church



Four churches served the community in the early days. The Catholic Church was discontinued several

years ago, but an Assemblies of God congregation has been organized so the town again has four congregations.

IOOF Lodge, several general stores, 2 drugstores, 2 hardware stores, 1 bank, a hotel and restaurant, livery stable and meat market opened by a Mr. Finn. Seven carloads of lumber a week were shipped in. There was agitation for incorporation.

In 1887 the Times front page consisted of 6 columns of ads and 2 of editorials. Only that and the back page were home-printed. Meridian Lodge No. 94 AF-AM was instituted.

Miss Mary E. Brennan started to teach the Primary Department after having taught several terms in country schools. She continued as teacher in both grades and High School, and as principal during the time we had a 2-year HS. In 1913 she resigned to become Postmaster during the Wilson administration. She never taught again, but always was busy at something for the good of the community. She was active in the Civic Improvement Club and it was largely through her efforts that our library was opened in 1929. She served as Librarian until her death in 1941.

The schoolhouse was moved to the block west of the present school block.

A new "Farmers Bank" was organized by J. L. Shortall, Mr. Eddy and Mr. Murrison. J. Henry Lloyd came to town as manager of the McCormick Machine Co., but a couple of years later was known to be working in the Loan Dept. of the Farmers Bank.

Mr. Murrison built a home east of the Congregational Church, now owned by Albert Christen-

sen. Ben Lewis built what is still the first house south of the parsonage. The Congregational ladies served an oyster supper at the church, price 35c and 20c.

There must have been some attempt to organizing a government for the village, as a sidewalk ordinance was passed which resulted in board sidewalks in front of most of the business places.

In 1888 the town board required licenses for any business started in town, even a dray. For the first time the teachers were paid in cash instead of warrants. E. F. Anderson was the barber. Evan Hoberg and Andrew Berge started a meat market, and an icehouse for their own use as well as to sell to the townspeople.

A cheese factory was built, but finished too late to do much business that year, so closed for the winter. The next year it did a booming business, but in the following years gradually ran out.

Chris Beck built a house, (and Ing was born in the house where he still lives). Chris worked for the Lewis Bros. and later started his own store, which remained in the family until Ing retired.

In 1889 South Dakota became a state on November 1st, with Pierre as temporary capitol. It was a dry state. Dr. I. A. Spooner was Senator from this county.

A Methodist minister held services in the Opera Hall on April 21, and organized a class of 8 members, and they started planning to build. The building was started later in the year and dedicated the next March, free from debt.

The Congregational Church bought their bell for \$150.00.





Banker Shortall built the house south of Knute Lewis, which is now the Funeral Home.

For several years there had been agitation for an artesian well, and a bond election for that purpose carried by 38 votes.

Several citizens attended the State Constitutional Convention held in Sioux Falls.

We needed a bridge across Lake Preston.

In 1890 L. J. Bates became Postmaster with the postoffice located in the Times Building.

H. I. Olston, James B. Sullivan and Wm. Fisher of Volga bought the Merchants Exchange Bank of which Knute Lewis was President, and Olston became Assistant Cashier.

R. B. Mills, who had been a machinery dealer here since the beginning, became assistant cashier of the Farmers Bank of South Dakota.

The Women's Relief Corps was organized as an auxiliary to the GAR.

A second Newspaper, "The Independent" was started but only lasted a few months.

The Farmers Bank closed in December and Murrison & Co. of Chicago became trustees. Two of their employees, R. B. Mills and J. Henry Lloyd, started a Land, Loan and Insurance business at once, and in June organized the Bank of Lake Preston. They eventually built the building owned by the City and in which the

Library is housed. It went the way of numerous other banks in the country in the 1920s. The Community State Bank was organized in 1925, and occupied the same building until the new one was built in 1969, south of the postoffice.

In 1891 the Lutheran Church started to build, across the street east of the Methodist Church.

Lewis and Lindner shipped 15,000 dozen eggs in January.

Baseball was a popular sport during the summer months.

The school added a third room in the grades.

R. B. Mills, after having been a gay bachelor for about 10 years, married Mary Greenleaf, the milliner. She was later to become the chief influence in organizing the Civic Improvement Club.

On the lists for perfect attendance in school, we find the names of Zernice Cummings, Leander Lewis and Charles Collins.

The population was 600.

There was a grain car shortage during harvest, and a dog problem, both of which still plague us today.

Wm. Peterman Sr. started a drugstore, and the next year built the first brick veneer building in town on the corner now occupied by Chuck's Grocery.

In 1892 the roller flour mill finally became a reality, with P. H. Haugen moving his equipment from Pierre,



The circus came to town, in about 1900.







The Community State Bank building, now housing the city library.

and a building was built by H. I. Olston and James B. Sullivan, where the 2 railroads cross, which would put it approximately on the site of the present Otter Tail Power Co. The mill also started to furnish electric lights in 1907.

This was election year and the Courthouse issue caused a lot of friction. It was not decisive, as a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority was required.

#### Swimming Pool—1926

Lake Preston over the last century has been a happy place to live, as many of the persons here during that span of time will agree. We have had our differences, our disagreements, likes and dislikes, but when the town wanted a project carried out, the citizens would be behind it almost 100%. We wanted a swimming pool, and in 1926 no government money was available for such projects. Instead the business men and some farmers signed notes for \$100 each and Harmon Kopperud of our bank advanced money on these notes (all of which were later repaid), and with the help of farmers with horses and equipment, ground was processed for the cement. Ladies furnished lunches while this was going on.

The next big project was the Kingsbury County Memorial Hospital in 1947 and this was quite a venture as very few places as small as Lake Preston had hospitals in those days. We had outside help for this, but it was the foresight of public spirited business men that was responsible for bringing the idea into reality. In 1954, Gordon Maxam was invited to Dallas, Texas to speak before the American Medical Association to tell them about our hospital. Otto Thorsnes, City Engineer, with his ability and public interest was a big help for this.

But our biggest project was the Kingsbury Memorial Manor in 1959, and behind this project from the very first was the vision and help of Harmon Kopperud. For this we had outside money to assist local contributions. This was one of the first homes in this area

and we are very proud of it.

We had a small library started by Miss Mary Brennan in 1929, and housed in first one room and then another until in 1967, when through the interest of the Senior Civic Club, the city bought the old Community State Bank Building and we were able to have a nice, quite complete library and Mrs. Dorothee Pike has proven a very competent librarian. This was accomplished too, without one cent of government money.

#### Lake Preston Market Report.

CORRECTED EVERY WEDNESDAY.

Wheat, No. 1	\$ 1.07
Wheat, No. 2	1.05
Wheat, No. 3	.95
Oats	.65
Corn	.85
Barley	.80
Flax	1.10
Potatoes	.75
Onions	1.00
Butter	.16
Eggs	.12
Flour	3.00 to 4.00
Salt Pork	.12
Coal, soft	7.00
Coal, hard	12.00
Shoulders	.12½
Hams	.15

June 1  
1882







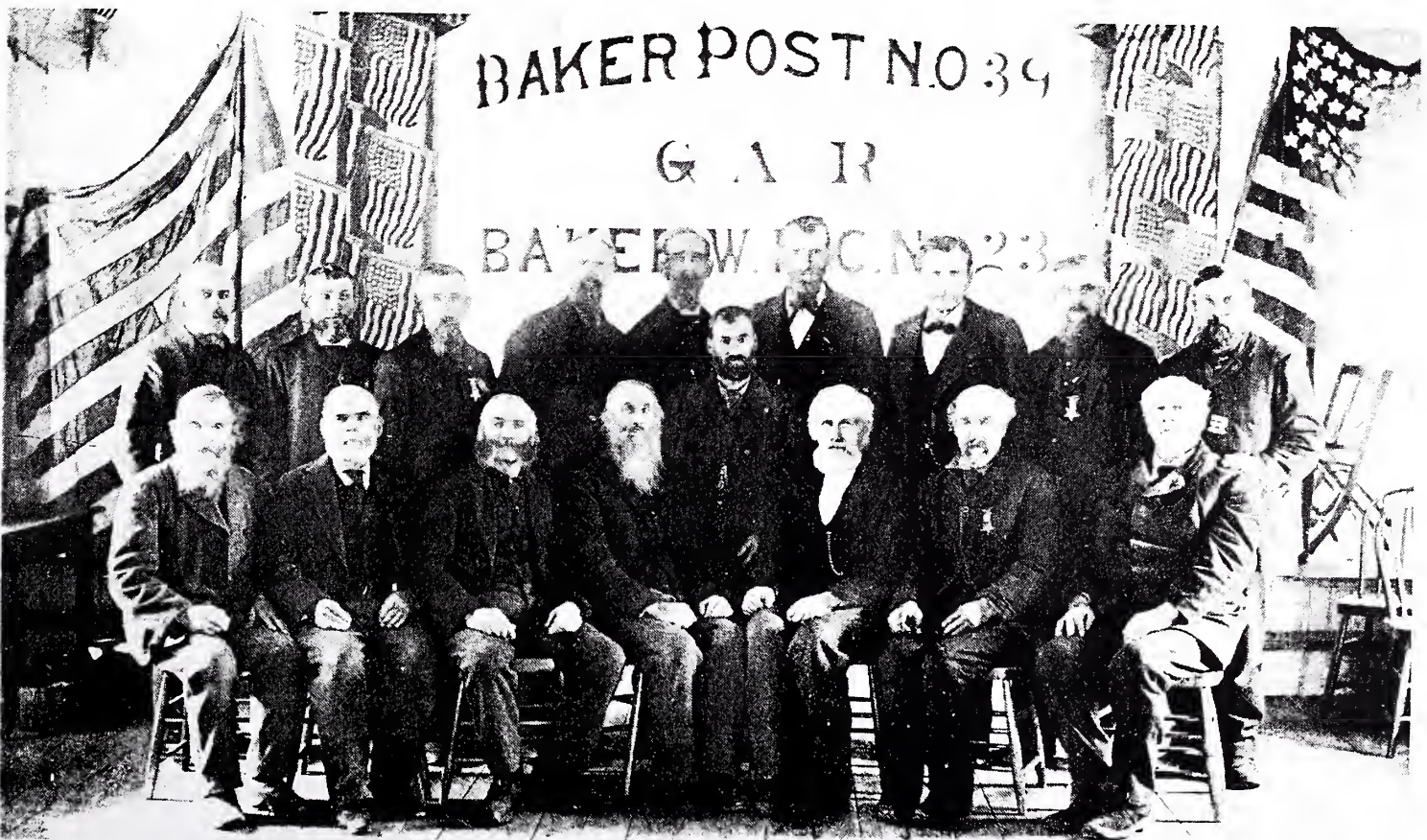
Newest of the Lake Preston churches is the Assembly of God, which was established in Lake Preston in March, 1935, as the Gospel Tabernacle. Services were held in the old G.A.R. hall, where the American Legion Hall is now located.

The hall was purchased by the church in late 1938, a decade later was remodeled, and in 1949 the name was changed to Lake Preston Assembly of God.

The picture above, made in September, 1941, shows the Sunday School and congregation.

The building was burned July 24, 1950, at the time the Farmers Union Oil company station was destroyed by fire. Congregation members and community friends saved the practically new pews, which had been acquired when the building was remodeled. Also saved were the piano and a few other articles.

Construction of a new church building was started immediately, and the cornerstone was laid and the building dedicated in 1951.



This picture of area veterans of the Union forces is believed to have been made in the 1880's, a couple decades after end of the war. The only identification we

have is of the third man from the right, back row — Charles J. Thorsness.





# Where the Name Came From

State of South Carolina

## Department of State

O. FRANK THORNTON  
SECRETARY OF STATE

JOHN P. STOKES  
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE

COLUMBIA 29201

SECURITIES DIVISION  
816 KEENAN BUILDING  
TEL 788-1823 AREA CODE 803

STANLEY V. LEWIS  
DEPUTY SECURITIES COMMISSIONER  
DIVISION OF PUBLIC CHARITIES

ERIC W. PANTSARI  
ADMINISTRATOR PUBLIC CHARITIES

April 6, 1979

Mr. William Lewis  
Post Office Box 65  
Lake Preston, South Dakota 57249

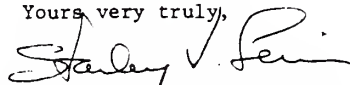
Dear Sir:

We enclose herewith the product of our research into William Campbell Preston. The South Carolina College mentioned herein is now the University of South Carolina. Dr. Preston was also married the third time to a Hampton, daughter of a local wealthy family and built a residence now in process of restoration known as the Hampton-Preston House. There is also a building at the University of South Carolina, located on the old Horseshoe known as Preston College.

We trust that this pins down for your centennial celebration that the Preston for whom your City is named would indeed come from South Carolina.

If we may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call upon us.

Yours very truly,



STANLEY V. LEWIS  
Deputy Securities Commissioner

### WILLIAM CAMPBELL PRESTON

From the book REMINISCENCES

- 1774 Born Dec. 27th in Philadelphia
- 1808 Student at Washington College, Lexington, Virginia
- 1809 Journeyed South for his health and entered South Carolina College
- 1812 Graduated from College
- 1816 Traveled to western frontier
- 1817 Traveled abroad and studied at Edinburgh
- 1819
- 1820 Admitted to Virginia Bar
- 1822 Married Marie Coalter and settled in Columbia, South Carolina
- 1828 Elected to South Carolina Legislature
- 1829 Wife died
- 1830 Reelected to Legislature--advocated nullification
- 1831 Married Louise Penelope Davis
- 1832 Reelected to Legislature, visited by Washington Davis
- 1836 Elected to U.S. Senate
- 1836 Made memorable speeches in Senate on Abolition, Annexation of Texas,
- 1842 French Spoliation Claim and Veto Power
- 1842 Resigned from Senate owing to unwillingness to act with Calhoun in latter's support of Van Buren's policy
- 1843 Delivered eulogy in Charleston, South Carolina on Hugh S. Le Gare'
- 1845 Became President of South Carolina College
- 1846 Received LDD degree from Harvard
- 1847 Second wife died
- 1851 Resigned from Presidency of South Carolina College
- 1851 Trustee of South Carolina College
- 1857
- 1859 Opposed Secession
- 1860 Died in Columbia, South Carolina, May 22nd.



# From the first issue of the Lake Preston Times, October 20, 1881

## LAKE PRESTON.

*Where it is--How it Came There--What it Has--What it Needs--Its Prospects.*

### The Surrounding Country.

The town of Lake Preston was not in existence three months ago, but to-day located on the south bank of the lake from which it derives its name stands this flourishing little village. When the Chicago & Northwestern Railway Company located their towns along the line of the Dakota Central for some reason, best known to themselves, they decided not to locate any town or towns between Nordland and De Smet, a distance of about 21 miles. The citizens of this locality soon began to see the immediate necessity of a town between these two points and numerous "schemes were set on foot" for its location; each and every man in the eastern portion of Kingsbury county had his favorite place for a town. Some preferred it at the east of the lake, 6 miles east of its present location; others 1½ miles east, where the Preston P. O. was then established. The present location of the Kingsbury post office also had its numerous admirers as a desirable point for a village. The general opinion, however, was that the northeast quarter of section 1, town 110, range 55, would be the most desirable point for its location. Early in the spring of the present year T. H. Maguire began negotiations with the railway company for its location at the last named point. In this he had the co-operation of the majority of the citizens in this community. The result of this negotiation was that the railway company, during the month of July, platted and surveyed such portion of the northeast quarter of section 1, as they deemed advisable.

We might devote considerable space in "showing up" the natural advantages of the town—its location and so on, but this is needless, as anyone who is acquainted with the geography of Kingsbury county can readily see that Lake Preston is located at a very desirable point. It is 9 miles east of DeSmet and 12 miles west of Nordland, its two nearest towns on the Dakota Central and upwards of 30 miles north of Madison and 40 miles south of Watertown, its nearest competitive points on the north and south. It is in the exact center of Kingsbury county north and south and 5½ miles east of the center, east and west. From this description of its lo-

cation it will be seen that Lake Preston is the nearest accessible point to a large tract of farming lands of which the products and trade will naturally be tributary to our town. The business houses of Lake Preston, are first-class in all respects. On the north side of the railroad track is the mammoth elevator of C. W. Seefield, of St. Charles, Minn. This building has a capacity of storing about 15,000 bushels of grain and facilities for handling about 50,000 bushels per day. Mr. R. B. Mills has charge of the elevator.

Our lumbering interests are supplied by Messrs. Laird, Norton & Co., who are represented by Mr. C. Douglass. They have a large supply of lumber and well constructed warehouse for its storage. On the south side, which is the present platted portion of the town, we find a commodious hotel known as the Starling House. Mr. F. Starling is the landlord. Next south of the hotel is the building owned by Mr. H. O. Omdalen, our Postmaster, which is to be fitted as a post office. The Times is also issued from this building and at this place we shall at all times be pleased to meet our friends and patrons. Next in order we find two large stores well stocked with general merchandise, owned and operated respectively by K. Lewis & Bro. and A. Erickson. South of these is the store of T. H. Maguire & Co., well stocked with hardware, stoves and tinware. This firm has one of the largest stocks of hardware to be found in Central Dakota. Our drug trade is supplied by Mr. L. Gerald, who has an ample stock of drugs, confectionery and segars. Dr. I. R. Spooner has erected a fine residence and office. We venture to say he will always be found ready to attend the wants of parties needing medical aid. Messrs. Johnson & Lundby and Wm. Warner have erected good blacksmith shops. The first mentioned firm makes a specialty of iron work. We are informed that Mr. Warner intends to work in both wood and iron. The numerous residences add much to the size and beauty of the village.

During the daily business toils the citizens of Lake Preston have not neglected their educational and religious interests.—The school district is about to issue bonds and orders to the amount of \$2,500 and will proceed at once to build a school house of that value.

Religious services are held each Sab-

bath alternately by the Congregationist and Methodist societies.

At present we are in direct need of a grist mill, a meat market, a harness shop and a furniture store. It is presumable that these branches of business will follow in a short time.

With an unsurpassed farming country, composed of rich prairie lands that have been cultivated for two or three years, tributary to Lake Preston, we can see no reason why the town should not have a constant and healthy growth.

Gathering everything into a nutshell and viewing it without prejudice we can predict nothing but success to Lake Preston, its present business men and such as ~~men in the future of the town~~ men in the future of the town.

## A Year Later

### GIRLS, COME TO DAKOTA.

If you are good-looking, come out here and marry some of our rich merchants!

If you are handsome, come out and marry some of our wealthy editors! The very prettiest are reserved for editors.

If you are just moderately prepossessing—have an acule nose, a sweet mouth, red hair, æsthetic tastes, come out and marry some of our well to do farmers and stock growers.

If you are unquestionably, undeniably, unhappily homely, come out and marry some of our poor bankers. Homely women must expect to put with anything they can get! Of course our bankers are poor but they are honest, and will undoubtedly make good husbands. If you can bring a guarantee that you are real downwright good, even though you are homely, you may possibly catch on to an affluent dray man or an opulent (by John! we almost wrote wood-sawyer) comainer.

Come anyway, girls, leaving beauty altogether out of the question. You will find a mate! There are hundreds of fine young men out here, who want to get married. But they can't. Young ladies are as scarce as fiddlers in paradise.

Come on; we'll bet a buffalo-robe against a pair of jack-rabbits that you are married inside of a six-month, if there is any fun in you at all.—*Brookings Co. P.*





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## Early Editorial Tribute

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From Another Editor, Reprinted in Sept. 16, 1886 Times

Lake Preston, Dakota, is a thriving village located on the main line of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, near the geographical center of Kingsbury county and forty miles east of Huron. The surrounding country is well settled with an intelligent and industrious class of people who, notwithstanding the severe drouth of the past season, are now busy gathering in an abundant harvest.

Lake Preston was first settled about five years ago, and now has a population of 300 people, who are mostly American-born intelligent and enterprising. The local sentiment is good, no saloon being tolerated. The village,

as well as the county, is for prohibition by a large majority.

They have a good church and a fine public school building, a good weekly newspaper enjoying a large circulation, several large and well-stocked general stores, two drug stores, two hardware stores, one good bank, hotel and restaurant, livery stables, meat market, etc.

A first class flouring mill could do a big business here and is needed very much. Besides their present railroad facilities, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad is now at work grading on its new line from Madison, Dakota, northward to Clark. They are now within two miles of this place, and expect to have the iron laid here by the First of November, which undoubtedly will make this place the terminus for the winter. This will help business considerably this fall. (Co. Pioneer Press)



The flour mill was important in the early day economy. With changing times it gave way to a power plant on the site. In the past year a peaking plant has been added, giving the community a quite large output of power for distribution over the extensive Otter Tail Power Company net.



# The Homestead Law

## A description of the Law and its evolution, by an area pioneer

As all the land in the United States belonged to the Federal government and not to the individual states, the law under which land could be had was the same for all states. The first law concerning land was the method to be used in surveying and has remained the same until this day.

This was passed in 1796. Next, a law in 1800 set the price of land at \$2 per acre, part cash and rest on time. However, this must have proved unsatisfactory as a law in 1820 cancelled the time payment but cut the price to \$1.25 per acre.

In 1841 the Pre-emption law was passed. This was a little stricter. Under this law the prospective landholder had to be a United States citizen, or at least to have taken out his "intention" papers, in which he declared he wished to become a citizen.

He also had to be 23 years of age, the head of the family, and not be the owner of over 320 acres of land. In addition, he had to swear he was not buying this land on speculation. When all this was arranged satisfactorily, he could get 160 acres of land at \$1.25 per acre and his deed.

On May 20, 1862, the well-known Homestead Law was passed. This has been considered the most liberal law any country has ever known. When the land seeker had picked out the land he wanted (160 acres or less), he applied at the nearest land office to file his claim. The claimer had to be 20 years of age or the head of a family and a citizen or an intentional citizen.

When he had signed the papers declaring his intention to become a homesteader, he paid the sum of \$14 for 160 acres of land valued at \$1.25 per acre. He now had to live on the land for five years, had to fashion some kind of dwelling fit to live in and had to break up a reasonable amount of land for crops.

At the end of five years, or seven years at the most, he could again appear at the land office and upon proving to the official in charge that he had fulfilled his obligations, he got his deed. The homesteader was allowed to be absent from his land not more than six months at a time. During this time he could go to some of the older settlements in the south or east or to the lumber camps in the winter to earn money. This money was needed especially during the first years and the "grasshopper years."

A soldier or sailor who served in the Civil War could get his deed in two years if he wanted to. A person who had taken land under the Pre-emption law could change it to homestead and thereby save \$200.

On March 3, 1873, they passed the Tree-claim Law. At first it specified that 40 acres of the 160 acres should be planted to trees, but this didn't work out while a homestead could be had without all this work. The next year the law was changed so that only 10 acres of trees had to be planted. The first year five acres were broken up, the second year a crop was to be planted, and the third year it was to be planted to trees. The second year the other five acres should be planted and put through the same process. Each acre was to have 2,700 trees planted on it, or 27,000 trees on the 10 acres.

If after eight years 6,750 of the 27,000 trees planted were alive, a deed could be secured. A man could take both homestead and tree claims. The tree claims could be taken any place, even in another state.

The Homestead Law was by far the greatest factor in getting the country settled, and it was meant to protect the poor settler. The homesteader could get his land for practically nothing, in place of buying it from large companies that bought it on speculation. The government, however, sold large tracts of land to big companies that held it until the homestead land was all gone. This land was then sold at high prices.



Main street in the very early days.







# Early Day Agriculture and Harvesting

As recounted by Harmon Kopperud, who witnessed much of it as threshing crew water boy, county agent, and banker.

The one thing that kept people alive those first years more than anything else was the old milk cow. As long as people have milk they can't starve to death. Cattle were pastured on land owned by absent landowners at no cost. Hay was put up the same way. The grain was stacked like small hay stacks, perhaps 8x12 feet with four stacks in a setting. There was room between for the threshing machine to get through.

The first binders were cumbersome and it took four horses to pull them. An old Minneapolis machine of this kind was still in use in 1893. In a few years the newer binders were pulled by three horses. One of the most advantageous things about the tractor is that it isn't necessary to torture the horses any more. In the harvest field especially, when the grain was ripe and there was a large area to harvest, the poor horses were pushed almost to the breaking point. My job when I was about 10 years old was to take out four fresh horses in order to give the other horses a rest.

About the middle of the forenoon and afternoon the crew would steal a look every little while toward the house, and sure enough, here comes the housewife with a coffee pot and a basket of good lunch. No time was wasted in getting down in the shade of one of the stacks, take off hats to make the most of a cool breeze, and for the next quarter hour or so, enjoy life at its best.

Stacks ranged in size all the way from 5 to 12 loads per stack. Four stacks made a setting and were placed in a square with room enough so the engine pulling the threshing machine could go between. When the feeder was moved forward far enough to make it the most convenient to pitch bundles into, the separator was

uncoupled and the engine was moved forward and lined up with the separator at a distance of about 50 feet, then a long belt from the flywheel on the engine to the main pulley on the separator was tightened up and the threshing was ready to begin.

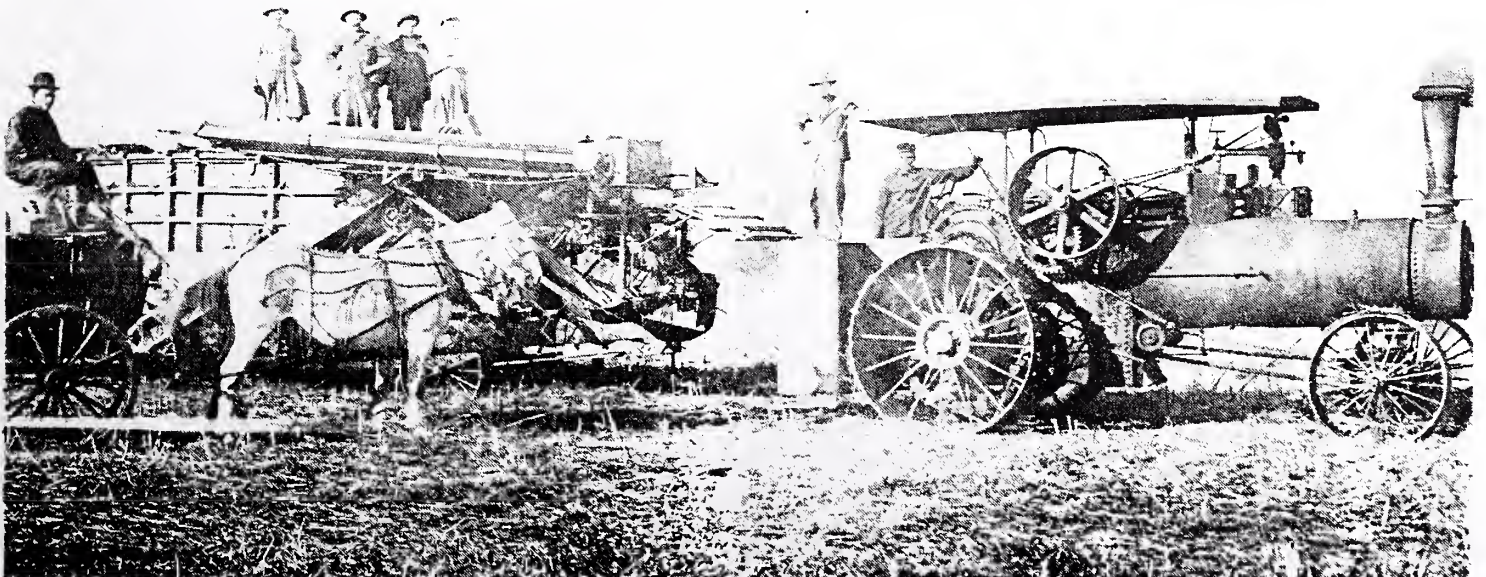
The straw-burning engine with steam for power, separators with greatly enlarged capacity, swinging straw carrier, automatic band cutter and feeder and a scale that weighed and recorded the grain were improvements that came into use within a few years.

The next improvement that came was what at first was called the cyclone straw stacker, later called the blower. This was a great labor saver, as with the old style carrier it took 3 or 4 men to stack the straw, while with the blower the one man could make a fairly good stack alone. The crew consisted of engineer, fireman, water hauler, separator attender and a sacker. Sometimes an extra man was needed to regulate the blower, but in later years the separator attender would regulate it. I had the job for several years of being the water monkey and got paid \$5 a day for myself and a team of horses compared to the spike pitchers who got \$2 a day for 10 to 11 hour work day.

The threshers who owned the machine furnished the 4 or 5 pitchers who pitched the bundles into the machine, two pitchers on each stack, except in case of some of the larger machines where 5 pitchers were used, the side that pitched against the wind having three men.

When the straw-burning engine was used, the fireman would get out at 2 o'clock in the morning, light his kerosene lantern and walk out to the machine to start his day's work. With straw as fuel, it took 3 hours or more to get up steam. At 5 o'clock or after he had steam up to normal gauge, he would go back to the farmhouse where he would eat breakfast with the rest of the crew.

All day long the fireman would stand there with a



A typical harvest scene.





fork and push a small wad of straw into the door of the engine firebox many times a minute. The straw rack was within easy reach. Flax straw was much preferred for fuel as it contained more heat units and it was easier to keep up steam.

Starting in 1913 and for the next three falls, I wanted the easiest job at threshing time so I borrowed some money from my Dad to buy a team of big horses and I got the job of hauling water to the steam threshing machine. Stack threshing would start as a rule in August and this continued until the middle of September or later and I would return to South Dakota State at Brookings a few weeks late.

Water hauling was the job most desired. A wooden tank was placed on a good wagon and on top of the tank was fastened a suction pump. To this pump was fastened a long 3-inch rubber hose. The water hauler using a good team hitched to this wagon would drive to a slough, lake or creek, put a pail down in the water, and placing the outer end of the hose in the pail so it couldn't suck in dirt, I would stand and work a handle that was connected to the pump back and forth, thereby filling the tank.

When the tank was full it took a good team to pull it across the field. There was a tank on the engine, that, when full, held enough water so the hauler should have time enough to get back with another load by the time the engine tank was empty, but sometimes in a dry season the source of supply was so far away I didn't have time to fill the tank. Then the engineer sounded four long blasts on the steam whistle and the hauler knew he had to get back in a hurry. It took two tankfuls a day.

With the advent of the tractor, the threshing picture gradually changed. With the tractor as power, two or more neighbors would buy a small separator and by cooperating would hire little, if any labor. About this time also, stacking grain was gradually discontinued and shock threshing was taking over. For many years harvest stacking and threshing hands were paid \$2 a day.

In those times transient workers were hired as temporary help. As soon as the shocks were removed from the field, plowing started with two horses pulling a 14-inch walking plow, but from 1900 on, the riding plows were replacing the others. A 16-inch riding plow was called a sulky and was pulled by three horse, while one having two 14-inch plows was called a gang plow and was pulled by 4 or 5 horses.

Practically all the plowing was done in the fall. In the spring the plowed ground was harrowed, then seeded with a drill, after which it was harrowed once more and the work on that field was done until harvest.

As the corn acreage increased, the work was more evenly spread out over the summer. The first years the corn ground was worked over with the corn cultivator, but soon the disk pulverizer came into use and did a much better job; and with the riding cultivator introduced about the same time, corn growing became easier. The first cultivators were pulled by two horses cultivating one row at a time, but in a few years the two-row machine appeared, pulled by four horses.

In the late 1890's and early 1900's the state hired some of the most successful farmers to travel around and conduct farmers' institutes. This was before the advent of the county Agricultural Agent. There were generally three in the traveling group, one of whom was the conductor. They would speak on the farm subject in which each specialized. The speakers didn't pretend to know all the answers. When a farmer asked one of them what to feed a hen to make her lay goose eggs, he had to own up he didn't know.

The first electric highline was built in Baker township in 1939 or 1940. This was also backed by government money to start with. There was a lot of opposition to this, even by some farmers. However, it has proved to be a brilliant success. Electric power does a job at just a small fraction of what it would cost to have it done by manpower.

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## Flora and Fauna of an Early Era

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By Stanley Falconer

When the first settlers arrived in this area they must have been awed by the sight of the gently rolling prairie and the lush cover of grass, plus the fact that there was almost nothing that could be called a hill as far as the eye could see. There were also potholes scattered all over the place and lakes not far apart to furnish water.

It was a truly beautiful country to the weary travelers as they looked upon it for the first time. We can only guess at the thoughts that went through their minds on that day. Here they would stake out their claim to a home, in a new land and above all to what they hoped would be a new and better life. They had heard many stories about Dakota Territory and they came with high hopes and perhaps some apprehension. The Government was offering land at such giveaway prices it was almost unbelievable.

Some years prior to the first settlers, surveyors came through the country setting up boundary markers so that when the people did come they could quickly determine the legal description of the land they wished to claim. These markers were stones placed at each

corner of a section of land, each rock used as a cornerstone to four sections.

There was a considerable amount of game in this area, especially in the spring and fall when the ducks and geese migrated. Some of my readers may not believe what I am about to tell but I have seen in the early 1920's flocks of ducks in early spring and late fall that were so enormous they nearly filled the entire sky.

From what I have seen and from what my father and grandfather have told me there must have been literally millions of birds in one flock. They filled every lake and waterhole in the area when they came through and they usually stayed as long as the weather permitted. It is claimed by two hunters in the fall of 1885 that they actually killed forty-nine ducks with two shots. I am not inclined to question this statement because I realize that when an almost solid wall of ducks rises before you, nearly every pellet from a shotgun would hit a duck.

Another reason it could be true is that many of the hunters of that day used ten-gauge guns which carried considerably more shot than the twelve-gauge. A few even had eight-gauge guns which were still larger.





Another reason it was possible is that when ducks are that numerous and not shot at too much it is easy to get very close to them before they take flight.

In fact I remember a time late in the fall when three men walked a forty-acre corn field filled with feeding ducks. When a shot was fired those ducks nearby would rise up and almost at once settle back to the ground again to feed. The main object of the hunt that afternoon was an albino or white Mallard. It seemed that he was the only wild duck in the field that afternoon and he was not shot.

From the report it was estimated there were in the neighborhood of two hundred thousand ducks in that field. One duck every square yard would mean 164,800. When feeding, ducks average much thicker than that as they like to feed close together even when in a small group.

In the early years there was no limit on ducks or geese, but later a limit of 50 ducks and 5 geese per day was imposed but not very well enforced as there was about one game warden in every two or three counties and travel too slow.

There were also Prairie Chickens or Grouse to be had in fairly large numbers at first but they soon became scarce and limits were placed on them a very few years after the country was settled.

There continued to be some in the area until the late twenties when the last of them disappeared from this area partly due to the dry years which started at that time and continued until the late nineteen thirties.

Quail also abounded in the area for the early settler but they too were put under strict protection and survived in small numbers until the big drouth of the thirties. It is thought by some that when the Pheasant became thick they destroyed the nests of Grouse and Quail. That is probably what finally exterminated them. But I believe that unlawful hunting reduced their numbers to the point where they were unable to exist in competition with other wild life. The fact is I know that a large amount of illegal hunting did go on in the twenties and thirties as I was an eye-witness.

When the settler moved in the Antelope moved out. The Antelope seemingly could not stand to live in settled country. The Deer stayed a little longer but due to the heavy hunting his ranks were soon thinned to the point where he had to move into rougher country or be wiped out entirely. As a result they went west until few deer were left east of the Missouri River.

There were also fur bearing animals here in large numbers such as Muskrat, Mink, Badger, Skunk, Fox, Wolf, Coyote, and Civet Cat. Although fur prices were very low, the settlers were able to supplement their incomes during the winter months by catching or shooting some of these animals.

Another animal found here by the settlers was the gopher. There were several types of these, the most numerous of which was the striped gopher or ground squirrel. He was also the smallest of the lot, being brown in color with rather faint stripes of lighter brown. He is an industrious little fellow that is very fond of grain and corn. He has a habit in the spring of the year to dig down and seek out the seed that has been planted as soon as a sprout appears above ground.

When there are many of these little creatures in one area they can almost completely destroy several acres of crop in a very few days. Many acres of crop were lost by the early settlers to these little pests until they learned how to control them. They found that the easiest and quickest way to substantially reduce their numbers was with poison grain scattered around the edge of the field at seeding time in the spring.

Another variety was the Grey gopher. He was larger than the striped gopher, in fact he would weigh about twice as much. His appetite was also about twice as big and while their numbers were much fewer, their destruction added to that of the smaller animals did the farmers no good.

The Pocket gopher was known by the pockets on each side of his neck and head. He had a habit of living in colonies and digging a vast network of holes and carrying the dirt out in his pockets and piling it up around his hole several inches high. They kept these entrances filled







with loose dirt except when they were actively using them. In cases where there were many gophers in a colony it was not unusual to find these mounds of dirt 6 or 8 feet apart and sometimes even closer in every direction covering several acres of land.

This made the cutting of hay very difficult as this dirt would stick in the sickle bar of the mowing machine and a poor job of cutting hay would result. These little fellows were slightly larger than the ground squirrel with a rather dull color probably best described as a faded brown or a greyish brown and very faintly striped or rather different shades of the same color. His work was much in evidence.

The Flicker tail gopher got his name from the manner in which he flicked his tail with every movement. He was the largest of the gophers found in this area. His living habits were very much like the prairie dog which were found farther west. They lived in inter-connected colonies so that they could go down one hole and up another 20 or 30 feet away. They were the largest of the gopher family found in this area with a color rather brown to grey and rather ragged or seedy looking. They could ruin everything around their colonies when found in large numbers.

They would sometimes have such a network of holes that grass could hardly grow above them. By systematic poisoning or shooting they could be completely wiped out, a thing which finally did happen after many years of partial control. They were actually the easiest of all the varieties of gophers to destroy because they lived only in colonies.

There were also several varieties of Hawks and Owls native to this area which the farmers proceeded to kill but were soon urged not to do so as they benefited the farmers insofar as they fed mainly on mice and gophers and did not harm the farmers crops or livestock. The chicken hawk was the only exception.

Of course there were many small birds that annually nested here, some of which were very beautiful and some of which were excellent singers. The following varieties: Blue Jay, Baltimore Oriole, Gold Finch, Shrike or Butcher Bird, Humming Bird, and a few others are rarely seen here any more.

The farmer was also periodically plagued with grasshoppers and crickets. The hoppers multiplied very rapidly in dry, warm weather and by the first part of June they would be very thick and shortly thereafter their effects could be seen in damaged crops. There was no known way of controlling them at that time and if the season continued on dry extensive damage resulted, often to the extent that whole fields of grain and corn were completely destroyed.

The last such epidemic to hit this area came in the 1930's. At that time a system was developed to poison them which helped only if used early in the season while the hoppers were yet mostly around the edge of the fields and in the pastures. About the only natural enemy they had seemed to be the seagull which came and went during the spring, summer and fall. If the gulls came in large numbers and sat down in a field they would clean out nearly every hopper in a very short time. This did not happen often enough to do a great deal of good.

The Cricket was a different matter; he liked the wetter seasons and many times after a farmer had his grain cut and shocked he would go to haul bundles to stack or thresh his grain only to find thousands of

crickets in every shock and much of the twine used to tie the bundles had been cut by these little pests and many heads of grain also cut and on the ground. The only thing ever done to stop the damage was to treat the twine with a repellent which was fairly effective in preventing twine cutting.

There were several lakes in this area which, when full of water, would only be a few feet deep. Any time the season was a bit dry the lakes would go down and, if several seasons in a row were dry, the lakes would go entirely dry. Then the farmers around the lakes would plant crops in them, sometimes harvesting enormous yields. Other years the rains would come during the summer and they would lose all of it.

Each time the lakes filled, fish would be put in and a few years of good fishing would follow. This seemed to be a recurring cycle of about once in twenty-five or thirty years. For the most part, Bullheads were one of the few fish that did well in these lakes. Perch did well in Lake Henry and once, that I know of, in Lake Whitewood. Northernns were planted in Whitewood once in the early days and did well until the water receded and then they froze out. The next spring dead fish lined the shores.

The country round about was treeless or almost so. It is thought that fires had not only destroyed what trees there may have been but that recurring fires had kept young trees from getting a start.

There were many prairie fires in early spring and late fall during the first years until they were able to get most of the land under the plow. Some years their losses were very heavy with many losing most or all of their hay and sometimes their grain crop as well. Now and then a set of farm buildings would also burn because of the prairie fire. The farmers would plow fire breaks to protect their buildings and crops but when the wind was strong, fire could, and sometimes did, jump these.

The early settlers described the soil here as being of a rich black loam, a foot or more in depth with a good clay subsoil beneath that had very good moisture holding capacity. they also claimed they could drop their breaking plows into the ground and plow a furrow half a mile long and have a strip of sod the full length of the field without one single break in it.

I can testify to the fact that it could be done for two reasons: First, their walking plow was designed especially for sod, and secondly, the grass roots were so numerous and strong that it took special effort to break the soil. Sometimes this sod was cut in chunks and laid one on top of another to make walls for a sod house. Sometimes the settler would dig back into a side hill and make a dugout house. My great grandmother had such a house on her homestead. They would dig on a level straight back about eight feet. This would leave the back wall about three feet high depending upon the slope of the hill. The room would be six or eight feet wide and the dirt from the hole was used to build the walls to the desired height and then poles or any pieces of wood available would be laid across the top and sod placed on them to form the roof.

When there was sufficient rain, grass would grow on the roof and sides. This made a cool place to be in hot summer weather. One disadvantage of this arrangement was that during and for a few hours after a heavy rain the roof had a habit of leaking. Anyone who knows what to look for can yet find the remains of a number of these dugouts.





# Dirty Thirties

By Stanley Falconer

Nineteen-thirty brought drouth to eastern South Dakota and with it many dust storms. Some of these storms were very severe. They blotted out the sun and left everything covered with a layer of very fine dust several inches deep sometimes.

The wind would gouge inches of topsoil from a plowed field and pile it up in fences until the whole fence was buried. Many people were made sick and some even died as a result of dust pneumonia and dust infection of the lungs. My story is about one of these storms and some of the things that happened.

April 21, 1934 dawned rather hazy and partly cloudy but not very windy; in fact there was only a light wind but the day did not look very promising. My father was in bed with a broken leg and I had hired a neighbor to help me finish planting the grain. As the forenoon wore on the sky became completely cloudy and the wind became a bit stronger so that at noon we had about a mile and a half visibility with a little dust in the air.

I was discing corn-stalk ground, getting it ready to seed oats. This field was a mile from home and I was using four horses to pull the disc. The hired man was seeding a field next to the buildings. At about three-thirty the clouds seemed to close in until the visibility was but a half mile. There was no noticeable increase in the wind but as time went on the clouds

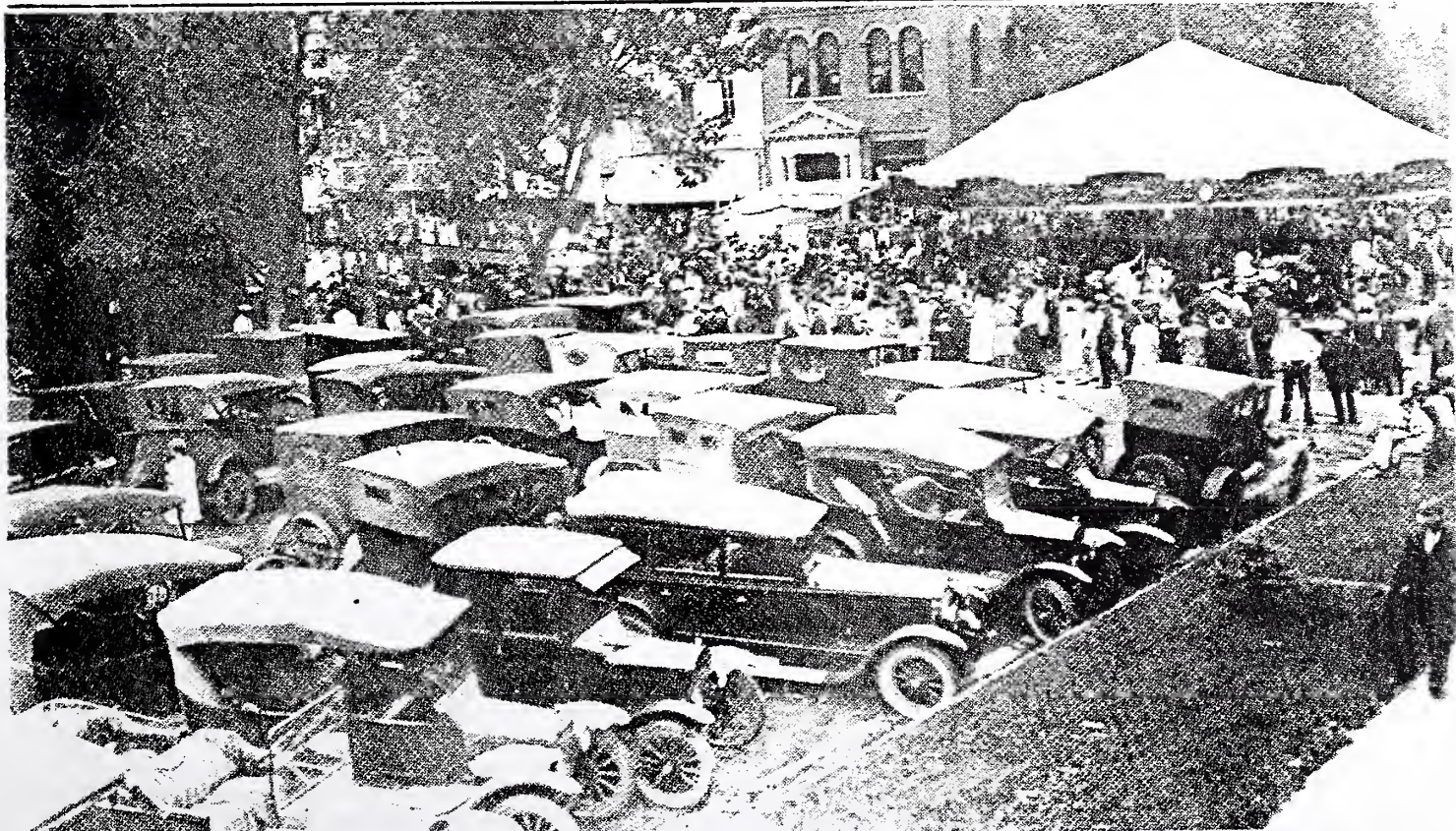
pressed closer and closer.

At four-thirty in the afternoon I was going from southwest to northeast across the field, having left the southwest about forty rods behind when, without warning, it hit. The whole cornfield seemed to rise up and hit me broadside. I was sitting on the disc not more than eight feet back of my team and I could not see them except for the white horse and she was only a dim blur.

This condition lasted for about a minute although it seemed much longer at the time. After the first blast the air cleared enough so I could see a few rods but it was almost as dark as night. I managed to get out of the field and get home and get my horses in the barn by five o'clock but we had to have light in the barn as it was too dark to work without it.

My mother had gone to town that afternoon to get some groceries and got caught in the storm three-quarters of a mile from home with a 100-lb. sack of sugar in the trunk of the car. After that first blast she was able to get home. When she opened the sugar sack dust had blown into the sugar at least two inches. Needless to say we ate the sugar, dirt and all. By six that evening the wind had subsided to a mere breeze but the dust still hung high in the sky. By the next morning the sky was clear but somewhat hazy.

A dust storm is one of the most terrifying experiences anyone can have and to one who has never seen or been in one, he cannot understand the feeling.



Watermelon Day was always a big day in Lake Preston. Antique car buffs will be able to date the Watermelon Day crowd pictured above by vintage of the cars pictured in the foreground. Note the new, small ever-

greens in the foreground—just north of the Merchants Exchange Bank building later occupied by the Lake Preston Times for many years.





# A Miraculous Rescue

**Mrs. P. A. Christensen tells this true story.**

"It was in the month of January in 1883; a really beautiful winter day it was. Everything was quiet and restful in this little town (The town was Lake Preston, Kingsbury County.) in the southeastern part of South Dakota. School was out and the children had come home, for it was already twilight.

The school house in which Mr. James was the teacher was three miles out of town. His two little boys were on their way to meet their father. But before they started off they stopped in at Mrs. Andersen's to get permission for her oldest boy to go with them. Her boy's name was Jack. In spite of the fact that he was only six and a half years old and of course not a very big boy, still he liked to be out and tumble about in the snow with the big boys; and since he had often been with the James boys on such a trip before, the mother gave permission at once for Jack to go along.

In those days the prairie did not look as it does now. There were no roads, people drove wherever they wished to go. Very little of the land was cultivated, and the houses were few and very small.

The three boys went straight across the prairie toward the schoolhouse. The snow was deep in the long grass and walking was very hard. Soon Jack became very tired and was unable to run any more. But the other two boys who were much bigger kept running very fast because they saw their father coming behind a little hill.

Jack soon lost sight of them; he must have changed his direction right after the two boys ran away from him; because when Mr. James and the two boys came back they did not see a sign of Jack. The boys thought Jack had run back to town and they did not mention that Jack had been with them.

When they got home Mrs. James had the meal ready and they all sat down at the table. Mrs. Andersen also had her dinner ready; it was now six o'clock.

When they were all seated at the table Mr. Andersen exclaimed, "Where in the world is Jack tonight?" "I gave him permission to go with the James boys to meet their father," said the Mother. "He is probably eating over there." But Mr. Andersen was not satisfied with this explanation which his wife gave and he got up from the table at once and said, "I believe it is best to get the boy home at once."

When Andersen got into the James house they were still sitting around the table in lively conversation. "Where is Jack?" was Andersen's first question. He had already seen that the boy was not among them. Both boys hesitated to answer. Andersen then asked if Jack had not been with them out on the prairie to meet their father. Then, for the first time, the truth came out that they had run away from Jack out near the little stream which ran a little south of town. Andersen didn't say anything more, but jumped up and ran out to the little bell which was rung when there was a fire in town or out on the prairie. All the townspeople came rushing out, but there was no fire to see. As soon as they heard what had happened, some ran in one direction and others in another, and in this way the entire town was assembled.

Some gathered lanterns, others provided rope which would be held between each man. Then they were all positioned in a straight line almost a mile long. They had to act fast or they might be too late. They were all agreed that this was the plan they had to use; the rope would surely take hold of little Jack.

The wind increased and the snow drifts grew higher and higher. When the rescuers came to a house they immediately found more help; for everyone wanted to help save the little boy. One farmer didn't take time to get on more than one boot, and stuck his bare foot into his overshoe and hurried off.

They searched and called, and called and searched in all directions, but all in vain. There was no Jack to be found! When it was 2 o'clock in the morning the men all came back to town—there was nothing more to do. If Jack was out on the prairie he would be frozen to death and covered with snow. The storm and cold increased all the time so it was very difficult to stay out on the prairie any longer.

In the Andersen home the food was untouched. The mother's anxiety had increased as time went by. Mr. Andersen did not go back home when he saw Jack was not with the James' family. He just shouted to all that Jack was alone out on the prairie, and they must all help him before it was too late. He knew all too well what it meant to be out on the prairie in such a storm as this: no roads, almost no houses, and almost no light from the small windows, and the snowfall increased so one could hardly see. In spite of the fact that Mr. Andersen was almost beside himself with anxiety, he still had used the good sense to gather all the men together with the rope fashioned in such a way that they could not have passed by Jack if he had been out on the prairie, and this gave him a small bit of comfort.

But Mrs. Andersen, poor dear, had to stay in the house with her two other little boys, in spite of the fact that she longed to be out with the rescue party. She thought the men moved so slowly; and she felt she could run one hundred miles, but she had no choice; she had to stay with her little ones.

Neighbors came and tried to comfort her. "They will soon be coming back and bring Jack with them, then all will be well," said one woman. Another said, "It is not so cold now, I am sure the boy is all right." Others thought he was with one of the neighbors and would be coming home at any moment now.

But the mother was out of the house almost as much as she was in. She sensed that a snowstorm like this one was very dangerous. She realized very clearly that the storm and cold were increasing with every minute.

At last they could not see the men's lanterns any more, nor could they hear their shouts; then the mother shut the door, took her youngest child in her lap and gave way to silent grief.

The men shouted to one another and gave signals with their lanterns to let each other know how things were going. Every elevation and the whole prairie had to be searched carefully.

When the men arrived home at 2 o'clock in the morning, they were all sure that Jack would lay well





covered on the prairie till spring would come, or the wolves would stay their hunger when they found him. But they were all determined to continue the search the next day.

At 8 o'clock in the morning all the men were ready to begin again. It was so light they could see the houses on the edge of town. The storm had subsided a good deal, but it was a bitter cold day.

The men started out in small groups. Each group would follow their own plan of search. There was none of the nervous fear, hurrying and shouting as the evening before; all started off very quietly.

Now, we are going to let Jack himself tell his story: "I didn't like it when the boys ran away from me. But I thought they would soon come back again. I was so sure Mr. James would not walk too fast for me, he never did that before. But I did not see them come back at all. So, I started to walk with the wind, for against the wind it was impossible for me to move. The snow hit my face very hard. Soon it grew very dark. Then I saw a light, yes, two lights and I thought perhaps they were the eyes of a wolf. I had heard the wolves' eyes look red in the dark. So I took my knife out of my pocket. One of the blades was broken, but it could cut anyway. I was not one bit afraid, the wolf was not too close anyway.

At last the lights disappeared, but I kept on walking. I was not one bit cold, and I was not tired either.

I walked a long way; then I saw a light. I walked directly toward the light. At last I could see quite plainly a little house. Then I was very happy. Then a big dog came barking at me. I was very much afraid of him. I ran away as fast as I could and pretty soon he stopped barking.

The snow was beginning to get a hard crust, so it was easier to walk. I went by another house, but there was no light, so I certainly could not go in there. Then I walked and I walked and the wind almost carried me away.

After a long time I finally came to another house; it had a light, but it also had a dog. It was worse than the first dog and made a horrible noise. After a while a man came out with a lantern and said to the dog, "What is the

trouble, old Faithful? What have you found?"

The man followed "Faithful" right over to me. "What do I see, Faithful — a little boy!"

This is what the man said to his dog, but he took my hand and helped me into his house. I am really so afraid of dogs I hardly dared to move.

Then I told the whole story about the James boys and that no one knew where I was.

"But who are you?" "My name is Jack and my father is the druggist in town."

"Lord preserve us boy," shouted the man, "we are nine miles from town and it is eleven o'clock at night. I don't dare to risk our lives by taking a chance to get you back to town in this snowstorm tonight."

Then they began to make a bed for me of their best quilts and blankets and soon I was sound asleep, snug and warm.

Very early the next morning I was awakened. The man was all ready dressed for a cold journey. I was given some food and wrapped in warm covers and I sat in the bottom of the sleigh.

Thus began my homeward journey. At last we could see the town. About eleven o'clock in the morning the farmer drove up to the Andersen's home.

I was out of the sleigh before Mother could open the door. She could not get a word out of her moth for sheer joy and surprise.

The first thing I said to her was "Mother, I had the most beautiful bed of all of you."

The fact that I had caused the whole town a sleepless night never dawned on me.

Again the bell was rung to call all the men together. This time there was joy in the hearts of the whole group and I stood in the midst of them.

This story was taken from a Norwegian Reader compiled by O. E. Rolvaag and P. J. Eikeland and used at St. Olaf College in 1920

Augsburg Publishing House  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Translated by Muriel M. Stubkjaer



The new school, built in 1902, still in use for grade school classes.



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## 'Pop Factory' a Thriving Pioneer Business --

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The Lake Preston Bottling Works, more commonly known down through the years as the "pop factory," was one of the more unique of the community's pioneer businesses.

The bottling works was established by Mr. and Mrs. George Pleck who came here from Canby, Minnesota, in 1900. They chose Lake Preston as site of their business because it had two railroads—and in the early days there was a lot of cases of soda water shipped.

Darlene Pleck, now of Aberdeen, daughter of the George Plecks, provided the accompanying picture for this booklet and advises us her folks always had two

hired men at the factory.

The Plecks started the Lake Preston Bottling Works in what was known as the Bergie building, just south of where Leander Lewis had his furniture store in later years.

Then, Miss Darlene Pleck writes, "in 1902 my Dad built the pop factory north across the Northwestern tracks and one block west from Main street. The factory was downstairs and we lived upstairs. I was born and raised there."

The picture of the pop factory was taken about 1909.

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## Passing of an Early Landmark



This picture pretty well tells the story, the "what," the "where," and the "when," and the "how."





# Pioneer Families, Personalities -

## A. J. BALDWIN FAMILY

### Notes from Sr. Civic Club Project

Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Baldwin came to Lake Preston in January of 1919, having bought a small retail oil business from L. R. Ledahl.

The first few years the business known as the Baldwin Oil Supply was located in an old liquor warehouse north of the Northwestern Railroad tracks.

Mr. Baldwin expanded the business by buying two oil delivery tank trucks and for 40 years delivered petroleum products to retail outlets in Erwin, Hetland, De Smet and Oldham, besides to the farm trade.

In the middle 1920 he built a retail station across from the Congregational Church. He also operated wholesale and retail stations in De Smet and Oldham. The oil industry will not soon forget the hard years of the '30s with rationing and no crops.

Mr. Dow Pattee worked for the company for more than 30 years, retiring because of ill health, the longest continuous record of an employee and employer association in Lake Preston. Mrs. Baldwin worked with her husband, keeping the books and assisting in the office.

Mr. Baldwin, a native born South Dakotan, was keenly interested not only in his own community, but as well in the state and nation. He served as president of the Commercial Club, was a member of the City Council for 20 years, was past-president of the South Dakota Oilmen's Association, and at the time of his death in May of 1953 was state chairman of the National Petroleum Industries Committee.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin were members of the Congregational Church and active in all church life. Mrs. Baldwin was very instrumental in securing a building for, and enlarging the City Library, which has added much to our town. Hazel was a 50-year Eastern Star member, and served as Grand Chaplain of the OES in 1945, as well as having held many of the different offices in the local chapter.

## BATES FAMILY

### By Mrs. Martha Bates

The Bates family originated in England and came to this country making their home in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. From there they went to Vermont and settled in central part and northern New York. The grandfather of Lyman Bates operated a ferry on Lake Champlain at Chimney Point across the lake to Vermont.

Lyman Bates's mother, Josephine Mary Needham, married Thomas B. Bates at Ferrisburg, Vermont. The family moved westward and for a time lived in Illinois and Indiana, settling in Iowa.

Lyman James Bates was born May 1, 1865, at Boylans Grove, Butler County, Iowa. His father died when he was young, and at the age of 9, he became an apprentice in the Parkersburg Eclipse, while going to school. In 1881 he came to Dakota Territory and worked in Huron at the Huronite for a short time, then came to Lake Preston and bought the Times from Charles Sterling. He was only 17 years old and not of legal age, so

the transaction was done in the name of his brother Frank who lived on a farm in the Whitewood area. The Times was first located on the east side of Main street in a building on the corner across from the Northwestern Depot. It was later moved to the building next to the old Post Office, and in 1930 was moved to the old Merchants Exchange Bank building.

In 1888 Lyman Bates married Minerva P. Taylor and they had two children, Carmon Lee and Marjorie Minerva. Minerva died in 1893 and Lyman's mother, Mrs. Josephine M. Needham Bates, came to keep house for them, and make a home for all. In a few years a cousin, Minnie Connell, came to live with them after the death of her mother.

Mr. Bates was an active booster for Lake Preston, taking an active part in all the promotions that would further enhance the community, such as the building of the first brick school house in the eastern part of the state for a community of this size. Another was the community effort that built the first swimming pool for a community this size in this part of the state. He was postmaster for many terms, and was a member of the school board, serving many years as president of the board.

He was active in the fraternal orders of Masons, and Odd Fellows, receiving the highest honors the orders could confer. He was also active in the state organizations, receiving many honors. His picture hangs in the Hall of Fame in Brookings along with many other editors of South Dakota.

In 1913 Lyman J. Bates married Martha Ellen Mauch and to this union four children were born: Delbert Mauch, Josephine Anna, Jewett Germond, and Benjamin Calvin.

Lyman's eldest son Carmon became the editor and publisher of the Onida paper after graduation at Yankton College. Later he went to Redfield where he published the Redfield Journal. Carmon married Helen Lyman, a college schoolmate. They had six children: David, Barbara, Betty, Lyman, Lois, and Jeannette.

Marjorie Bates taught school after graduating from Yankton College. She married Harvey Woodworth and they had one son, Charles. They made their home in Puyallup, Washington.

After graduating from Yankton College, Delbert Bates taught school until he was drafted into the Army of the United States. After his discharge he attended the University of Chicago, receiving a doctorate degree in education. He was called back into the service and taught meteorology at the Selfridge Air Force Base during the Korean combat. When released he went to work at the Detroit Press. He married Roberta Baas, and they had one son, Kenneth. Delbert is now retired and they live on a small acreage farm out of Romeo, Michigan.

After graduating from Yankton College, Josephine Bates went to Minneapolis, Minn. and worked as a secretary for a Mental Health Clinic. She then went to New York and soon joined the Waves. She received training at Smith College, Massachusetts, and was sent to Macon, Georgia to work for the duration. After the war she came to Lost Angeles and worked as a public





accountant for a time, then went to San Anselmo, California, to attend the Seminary. She received a degree in Religious music and a degree in Bible. She then went to Seattle where she worked and received a Masters Degree in mental health and social work. She then went to Los Angeles to attend the University of Southern California and received her doctorate in Social Welfare and Mental Health Research and Family Therapy. She lives in Prescott, Arizona and works in the southwest states.

Jewett Bates became the linotype operator in the Lake Preston Times and right hand helper for his mother when he graduated from high school. After two years he took a course in aviation at the Brookings College and then went to California where he worked in the Douglas Aviation Plant at Santa Monica. He served a stint in the army and on being discharged he became a linotype machinist working at the Los Angeles Herald office and other printing offices. He now owns a job printing office in Modesto, California and lives in Ceres, a suburb. Jewett married Ruby Taken and they had four children: Betty Jean, Peggy Jo Ann, John Gregory, and Angela Marie.

Calvin Bates had two years of college at Yankton and was then called to Navy duty, and trained as a navigator in the Navy Air Service. After the war he went to Los Angeles where he got a job at the Pacific Press as a color pressman which job he still holds. Calvin married Sarah An Bloxsom and they had two children: Carol Dorothy and Donald Lee. They live in Anaheim, California.

Mrs. Martha Bates took over the publication of the Lake Preston Times after the death of her husband in 1929. She was also appointed Postmistress. In 1937 her two nieces came to live with them: Florence Bracy, now Mrs. Delbert Olson, living in Lake Preston; and Lola Bracy, now Mrs. Fred Brass, living in Alpena, South Dakota.

In 1940 Mrs. Bates sold the Times and in 1943 went to Los Angeles to visit and remained to make her home there. During the war she worked in the Army Office at the Douglas Plant in Santa Monica. After the war she was employed as a statistical clerk in the engineer department of the Southern California Water Company. She was retired in 1959 and moved to Leisure World, Seal Beach, California when the community was just being built.

## CHRISTIAN BECK FAMILY

**By Mrs. LeRoy Pederson**

Christian Hanson Beck was born June 18, 1854, at Land, North Torpen, Norway, his parents being Hans and Ingeborg (Bjerkebakken) Beck. Chris was the oldest of seven children.

He emigrated to the United States in young manhood, changing his name when he came to this country from Norway, it was Christian Hanson. It was the custom in Norway that the oldest son took the father's first name and added "son" — thus Hans and son became Hanson. The rest of the children took their father's last name. That is why it is so hard to trace family history in Norway.

After working around in Minnesota for a few years he finally settled in Dakota Territory, in the community which later became Lake Preston. For a short while he

worked at section work, on the railroad; later was employed as a clerk by "Lewis Bros. & Lindner," a merchandise business, where he worked for seven years. (This is where the senior citizens meet today.)

Later Chris Beck started in business for himself, his general store was one of the first grocery stores in Lake Preston, S.D., located on the west side of main street just north of the Barber shop now.

On Nov. 13, 1887 he married Marie Martinus Nordhagen. Marie was born March 13, 1866 in Trysil, Norway and was one of five children born to Martinus and Martha Nordhagen. His bride had immigrated to the United States two years before this time. She came to Lake Preston, S.D., in 1885, where her brother, Peter Nordhagen, already resided. Another brother, Martin, came later.

Chris and Marie built a house one block east of the main street. (Ing still lived in this house until just a few years ago.) As they established their home, they were blessed with four sons and one daughter, namely: Helmer "Melvin" Beck, Ingvold Melker Beck, Calen Marius Beck, Clara "Margit" Josephine Beck, and "Clarence" Elmer Beck.

Both Chris and Marie had been brought up in a strong Lutheran faith from childhood in Norway — and likewise did a fine job of rearing their family in the same manner. As the children grew up, each one took turns assisting their father in the General store. Many of the first people in Lake Preston can recall warming themselves around the old "pot-bellied" stove at Beck's store, on the cold winter days, and visiting with neighbors and friends.

In 1890, the year after So. Dak. was admitted to the Union, Lake Preston's first Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church was started, with the officers being: N. W. Ellefsen, Austin Berge, A. C. Moyan, A. P. Kabberud, Hans I. Olston, and C. H. Beck. The congregation had 21 voting members with Lauritz Thoresen as pastor. In 1908 the church was rebuilt, C. H. Beck, together with James Lewis and Hans. J. Setbacken were trustees at that time. Grandpa Beck contributed a large sum toward a new pipe organ for the church (which now stands in the Memorial Arts Bldg., at S.D. State Univ. in Brookings).

Grandma Marie Beck also was very active in helping organize their ladies aid group. She loved music, and as her daughter, Margit, grew up she told her to practice her music lesson while her mother did the dishes. She wanted Margit to be able to play the piano well, and this she did, as she played piano and organ in the church here for many years.

There is supposed to be a song in Norway written "To the Little Girl who Sings Outside My Prison Walls" — by a prisoner. As a child Grandma Beck used to go and sing to the prisoners — she said she couldn't see them, but she knew they were lonely.

Chris and Marie built a home in Lake Preston — one block east of main street (where Ing lived until going to the Manor a few short years ago). Here they raised their family. The three older boys, Melvin, Ing, and Calen were very interested in Baseball and all played on the first baseball teams organized in Lake Preston. Later Melvin was married to Achsa Nelson on March 8, 1910, and Ing to Josephine Lewis on March 11, 1915.

The fall of 1916 was a very hard one for Grandpa Chris — as on Sept. 22, his wife, Marie died of typhoid fever, and his son Calen died only five days later on Sept.





27th, the latter having had ruptured appendix and jaundice; in this run down condition also contacted typhoid Fever — which caused his death. Their younger son, Clarence, also had typhoid at the same time. This made it very hard for Chris to go on — Melvin and his wife Achsa helped raise the two younger children, Margit and Clarence. then later they lived with brother Ing.

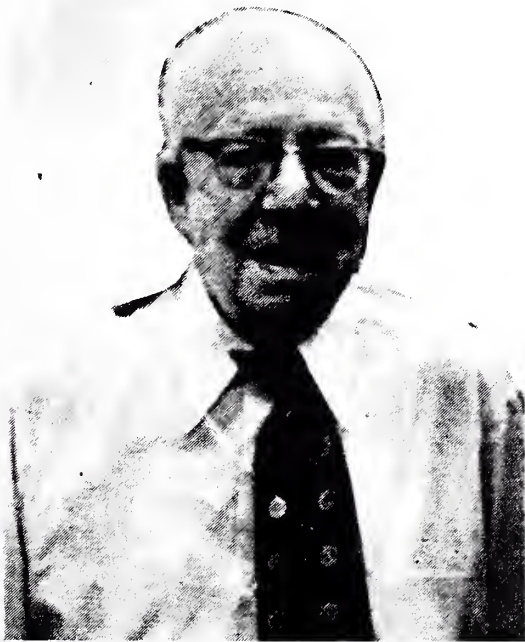
About two years later, one Sunday morning, as Grandpa Chris was sweeping off the board-walk in front of his home, he was stricken with a sudden heart attack and died shortly afterward. This was on March 9, 1919.

Then on June 8, 1929 Margit was married to Sigurd M. Jordet, and Clarence married Edla Sunberg, of Arlington, S. D.

Ing and his son Wendell continued to operate the store for several years, until the old building became beyond repair. They then built a new store (where the Trading Post is today) and the old C. H. Beck landmark was torn down.

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## ING BECK FAMILY



**Ing Beck**

**By Mrs. Gordon [Ruth Beck] Jensen**

I would like to add just a few thoughts on Lake Preston's oldest "lifelong-lived-there resident."

My father, Mr. Ingvald M. Beck, is the oldest living resident of Lake Preston, S.D. He will be 90 years old this year. "Ing" has lived his entire life in the city of Lake Preston.

He was owner and operator of Beck's Store which was operated in the same building as he and his father had, until the early 1960's when he and his son Wendell built a new store building (which is now the Family Trading Post). Becks sold the store to Loyal Zeeck in the mid '60s.

The old store housed the largest candy display counter in many a mile (which any former youngster of 50 years and older can attest to), likewise a cookie display was also very popular, both giving way to packaging and convenience but somehow losing something along the way. The pickle, cracker and cheese

barrels are also a fond memory.

Nights (Saturday and Wednesday) kept the busy grocer up sometimes from 12 midnight to 2 a.m. to accommodate customers during harvest time.

Many a person came in to get warmed by the huge old pot-bellied stove. The "back room" was where egg candling was done, customers bringing in their wooden 12-dozen egg crates to "trade" for their groceries, which they also used to carry as many groceries as would fit in the crates.

This "back room" held what today would be a wealth of antiques, but at that time of closing the old to move to the new store, was considered so much old "junk" and was disposed of in levelling the old structure.

During the early years and during the depression, Ing's kind and loving heart kept food on many a table, which would have been empty had it not been for his love for his fellow man. He was one of the most long-termed members of the Lake Preston fire department, of which he now is an honorary member.

He was very active in sports from the early years on, and for many years served as LPHS scorekeeper for basketball. All young people loved him.

He proudly served as mayor of Lake Preston at the age of 80, during which time the first all-school reunion was held. It was quite an honor to this kind, good man whose greatest love is his dear town, Lake Preston.

Ing's home now is at Kingsbury Memorial Manor, Lake Preston.

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## BERDAHL FAMILY

**By Mrs. Agnes Tenneboe**

2401 Carter Place, Sioux Falls, S.D. 57105

This story will tell about the Anfind Berdahl family, which was one of the earliest pioneer families to settle in Kingsbury County, about the year of 1879. Mr. Berdahl, a native of Sogn, Norway, was married to Esther Anderson in Minnesota.

Coming here from Rushford, Minnesota, were three pioneer families traveling in covered wagons; namely, Ole Huke, Thorsten Bassness, and the Anfind Berdahl family. Ed Berdahl made the trip with his parents when he was then about 3 years old.

It was all prairie land along the way—grass one foot high. At Dell Rapids they encountered a prairie fire, with huge flames coming toward them. They had to drive their covered wagons out into a nearby lake to save their possessions. After the flames went past, they had to carry things out of their wagons and get back out of the lake. They had oxen to pull their wagons—no reins. They said "Gee" and "Haw" to make the oxen go.

The Berdahl family located 4 miles east of Lake Preston and built their own sod house on a farm which they bought. Henry was born in this sod house on November 9, 1879. Other children in this family were, Emma, Ida, Alfred and Sina. Grandmother Berdahl churned their own butter and sold it to stores in Lake Preston for 4c a pound. Unsalted butter brought the best price. Sometimes she traded it for groceries. She walked the 4 miles to Lake Preston along the railroad tracks to do this.

The Blizzard of 1888 was a memorable event. Snow was as deep as telephone poles. Knute Lewis, a merchant in Lake Preston, went on skis from Lake Preston to Volga and followed the telephone poles—sat down to rest





on the tops and wires. Snow came in October and trains did not come through until next May. The old tobacco chewers saved their chewing tobacco in their pockets and then chewed their pockets!

At first there were no wells for water, so they had to chase the cattle out to nearby Lake Whitewood in winter to get water. They sprinkled sand on the ice so that the cows would not slip down. Henry and Ed would take the cows down to the slough in the east part of their pasture in summer. There they had a well from a spring.

Once during the winter, Ed and Henry tied a sled to a steer's tail to get a free ride while taking the cattle down for a drink. The steer became frightened and ran away with the sled flying through the air. He ran into the herd of cows and scared all of them also. They don't recall how the steer ever got free from the sled. They had tied the sled rope to the steer's tail and looped the end back up to hold it well.

The Berdahl family salted all fresh meat when they butchered. The boys did lots of hunting between the lakes. Most of the time they hunted with only 2 or 3 shells—waiting to shoot two ducks with one shot. Grandmother Berdahl made all their featherbeds (7 or 8) with goose feathers.

Henry Berdahl walked  $3\frac{1}{4}$  miles to school across fields, since there were no roads. In winter he walked in snow with no overshoes. Brother Ed and Henry went to school every other day—changed off to help out at home, doing chores, hauling hay and cleaning out the barn. They went to school this way for about 8 years. Incidentally, his 2 daughters also attended school in this same one room rural school and later, his youngest daughter (Agnes) returned to teach there for 4 years during the 1930's.

The boys helped their Dad with farming, using horses for field work. The plowing was done in the fall of the year. It was started with a walking plow, and then they got a sulkey plow, which had one plow leigh. They drove 3 horses on the 7 foot drag, and walked all day behind the drag. By night, the legs were plenty dirty and tired!

The seeding was done by a broadcast seeder, mostly wheat and oats. They cut the grain with a 6 foot Binder that didn't have a bundle carrier, so they walked all over the field and picked up the bundles to shock them.

The grain was stacked and when the stacks had gone through a "sweat", it was ready to be threshed. They used a horse power threshing machine, using 6 teams of horses. The grain was then measured in  $\frac{1}{2}$  bushel measures. It was placed in sacks (2 bushels to each sack) and hauled to town to sell.

In 1904-1905, they started shock threshing with steam engines. About 24 men did the work. They had bunk cars for the help for sleeping quarters.

Some of the hardest times were in the early "nineties." Money was hard to get and they had to pay from 9 to 11 percent interest with double security.

Transportation was mostly by oxen, horses and wagons. There were only dirt roads. Railroads and telegraph were the only inventions. The telephone came a little later.

In 1905, at the age of 26, Henry Berdahl started farming for himself, on a farm adjoining the home place. He bought the farm in 1908, was married in 1912 and lived on the same farm in this area for over 60 years. During the course of these years, he built a new barn in



**Mr. and Mrs. Henry Berdahl**

1914, a new house in 1926, and witnessed many changes and events such as droughts, grasshopper plagues, dust storms, dry and full lakes, cyclones, and the first radio usage.

Henry was a charter member of the Lake Preston Lutheran Church. He served many years on the school board and also on the township board. His 2 daughters include Mrs. Lloyd Tenneboe (Agnes), of Sioux Falls, and Mrs. W. C. Gregory (Mildred) of Burlington, North Carolina.

In 1972, Henry passed away at the age of 92 years. His wife Millie passed away in 1978 and consequently was the last member to carry the Berdahl name in this 100 year era of Lake Preston.

Compiled by Agnes Tenneboe

## **COLLIN FAMILY**

**By Marian Collin Hendricks**

My parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Collin became acquainted in Lake Preston in the early 1900's. Mother (Olga Anderson) came from her family farm home south of Hetland to work in the Sederstrom Restaurant. Dad came with his parents to S. Dakota from Wisconsin, on the N.W. Railroad.

The Sederstrom eating place was a very busy place at all hours of the day and every day of the week. Many who ate there were railroad employees.

Dad was a painter and paper hanger for the Lake Preston community from the time he was a very young man until he retired. He was close to eighty years when he retired. He didn't have a car to transport his ladders and other equipment from his home to the place he was working, but he had a big two wheel cart which he pushed.

He also worked for people in the country and neighboring towns. The income per day was far less than the amount many get an hour at the present time.

The folks also had a small dairy farm. The pasture





land, for the cows, was north and east of the LeRoy Collin place. The whole family took part in delivering the milk to the many customers. We each had our special route by walking to all parts of town in all kinds of weather.

The milk was delivered in pails of various sizes and was sold for eight cents a quart. Later glass milk bottles were used and the price went up to ten cents a quart.

One of the stops was at the Henry Lloyd home (present Sittner home). It often happened when the weather was bad Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd would ask us in to stand by the fireplace to get warm and enjoy some tasty candy treats.

The Collin's first car was a Model T Ford which was a great luxury. It was used for Sunday afternoon trips to my grandparents' farm south of Hetland.

Lake Henry was the recreation resort for family picnics on Sundays and special holidays. There were many activities for entertainment, such as swimming, boat riding, fishing, baseball games, etc. Some summer months there was a merry-go-round for us to ride.

I have many fond and happy memories of Lake Preston. I am glad I lived there so many years. I am looking forward to attending the celebration in June.

Best wishes to all of you Lake Preston people for a very successful and happy Centennial celebration.

## EDWARD COULSON FAMILY

Submitted by Mrs. Leslie Larson

Born Nov. 21, 1864. Died Oct. 13, 1942.

Born in Liverpool, England, to Mildred (Armstrong) and Joseph Coulson. Ed came with his parents to the U. S. in 1881. Spending 1 year in Minnesota. Near St. Charles. Where his father passed away.

Edward and his mother came to S. Dak. in 1882, where his mother homesteaded, N.E. of Erwin, S. Dak.

They recorded the first claim in 1883. Edward was 19 years old, and too young to homestead land. In 1888, he took over the land.

On May 22, 1888, Edward married Mary Golseth of Erwin, S. Dak. They had four children: Fred Coulson of Brookings, S. Dak.; Mildred (Mrs. Francis Larson) of Lake Preston, S. Dak.; Hattie Coulson of Santa Cruz, Ca.; Edith (Mrs. Dale Dunbar) of Laguna Beach, Ca.

In 1900, Edward and his family moved to Erwin, S. Dak. Continued farming. Later took a job carrying mail. Then, in 1919 decided to move to Santa Cruz, Ca. Mildred and Fred remained in S. Dak.

Coulsons lived there until their death.

There were 11 brothers and sisters: William (never married), John, George (never married), Henry (Frank and Bert Coulson's Dad), Thomas (George and Alys Coulson's father), George lives in Lake Preston; Charles (never married); Robert (Alfred Coulson's Dad); Edward (Fred, Mildred, Hattie and Edith's father); Rebecca (Mrs. Fred Waby) and Mrs. Myrtie Marquardt's mother; Mary (Mrs. Tim Waby); Ann (Mrs. Billy Brown).

Land is owned by Fred and Hattie Coulson.

Leslie Larson farmed the land for many years. When he retired, his son Dale (fourth generation) assisted by Dale's two sons, Larry and David, continued to farm the land.

## FALCONER FAMILY

By Stanley Falconer

Sometime during the year of 1878 (probably in the fall), Henry E. Falconer and two of his brothers came to Dakota Territory where two of them (Henry and John) filed homesteads just south of Lake Whitewood in what later became Spring Lake township. Will the other brother filed on a quarter north of Erwin.

The spring of seventy-nine saw the brothers unloading their possessions from a freight car at the end of the line which was Volga.

On Jan. 1, 1882 my father Harry was born on this homestead and became the only son and child of Henry and Mary Falconer.

On a bright sunny day in Jan. 1888 my father (then 6 years old) went outdoors to play in the snow and my grandfather went to water his livestock. To do this it was necessary to take them about 20 rods to the well which was on low ground. At that time all wells were hand dug and shallow. The water was dipped with rope and pail. While at this chore he noticed what seemed to be a black wall in the northwest. As he watched it appeared to be approaching very rapidly so he hurried his livestock into the barn just ahead of the storm. It was impossible to see anything in this storm so my grandfather tied any ropes and straps together that he had in the barn. One end of this line he tied to the barn door, the other he held and started out to find the clothes line which was located between house and barn. When he found it he went to the other end which was about ten feet from the house. At that distance he could not see the house but he knew where it was and arrived safely.

In the meantime my father had gotten cold and went into the house about ten minutes before the storm.

I do not remember what was told me about how long this blizzard lasted but it was a very severe one.

When my father came of age he went west of the Missouri River to homestead where he settled on a quarter about four miles northwest of Nolan, S. D. In the fall of 1907 he married and in Nov. 1908 I was born on that homestead. My father had proved up earlier that same year and as my grandfather was retiring he sold the homestead and moved back to Lake Preston where he spent the rest of his farming days on his father's homestead.

In May 1912 my father became the proud owner of the first car in the neighborhood, a model T Ford, the first event in my life that I remember.

I have four brothers and one sister. One brother passed on in 1972 and the others have moved to various parts of the U. S.

The other two original Falconer brothers left this area during the first Twenty-five years.

## GARLOCK FAMILY

By June Garlock

Vernon and I were married in Clear Lake, Iowa, in 1912, and went to Lily a very short time and then to Bradley, S.D.

We lived upstairs in depots and then we moved to the depot in Lake Preston. Our three children were born in the depot at Bradley. There was no running water or electricity. We had to carry coal upstairs and ashes downstairs.

We came to Lake Preston in 1918 and he retired in





1970. It was such a long time—I didn't realize how long it was.

We had one more child born here in Lake Preston.

We lived here for a few years in the depot and then we bought a home.

Life in the depot was different. Lots of noise when the trains went through but I don't remember that the babies were wakened.

There were four rooms upstairs with two bedrooms; terrible winding stairs to get up with baskets of clothes, groceries, water and coal, and downstairs with ashes.

The waiting room was large and we'd hang our clothes downstairs.

The children all learned to roller skate around the pot-bellied stove in the waiting room.

Those pot-bellied stoves were wonderful for heat. We were always nice and warm and had coal furnished.

We were always proud to work for the Milwaukee Railroad—and look at the way the Milwaukee is today!



V. A. Garlock

## GERALD FAMILY

By Oliver Gerald

Lewis Gerald, together with his parents and one brother, migrated to this vicinity in the year 1878. His parents and brother returned to Minnesota and spent their remaining years there.

Lewis Gerald built the first drug store at a location then called Freemont, about two miles east of the present town site. Five or six other buildings were located there.

At a later date when the two railroads were to cross, the buildings were moved to the present town site, which is now Lake Preston.

In the year 1883 Lewis Gerald sold the drug store business to I. A. Keith. He then homesteaded on land three and one half miles west of Oldham where he spent the rest of his life.

Lewis Gerald was the grandfather of Oliver Gerald.

## GILES FAMILY

By May Giles

Nathen Richard Giles was born in England in 1833, and Dorcas Buffum Nichols, a Quaker, was born in Winslow, Maine, in 1832. Her ancestors came to America 18 years after the Pilgrims (1638).

N. R. Giles and Dorcas B. Nichols were married April 3, 1855, at Providence, R.I. He had fought in the Civil War and later, in 1882, came to Kingsbury county, taking up a homestead 8 miles north of Lake Preston. Here they lived with their seven children.

Mr. Giles also was a jeweler in town, and daily walked to town from the homestead to operate the store. Mrs. Giles was a school teacher and in later years was revered as one of the kindly souls who helped bring many a baby into the world.

N. R. Giles died in 1919 at the age of 86, and his wife passed away in 1926 at the age of 94. Children of this family were William F. Giles, Alice Marion Giles, John H. Giles, Anna F. Giles Lewis, Charles W. Giles, Sarah (Sadie) F. Giles Look and Mary E. Giles Thorstad Caron.

My recollections of Alice Giles were of her in a wheelchair. In 1911 she and her father N. R. were on their way to see John H. Giles, her brother who lived 10 miles north of Lake Preston, when a car scared their horse causing a buggy accident. Alice received a severe hip injury which left her crippled the rest of her life.

To the best of my knowledge this Jewelry Store in the accompanying picture was built in 1882 or 1883. As to when the picture was taken is unknown but it was apparently shortly thereafter. Please note the board sidewalks and child's wagon.



From left to right are Nathan Richard Giles, Dorcas B. Giles, his wife, and Alice Marion Giles, their daughter. N. R. Giles operated this Jewelry Store from 1882 to 1910, a period of 28 years. Mr. Giles sold his jewelry store to Gunder Sorstad in 1910 and to my knowledge Sorstad owned this store until it was torn down to make way for the new Preston Theater, now currently the Lake Preston Times office.





## CHRISTIAN JENSEN FAMILY

Submitted by Mrs. Leslie Larson

Was a farmer and lived on Section 26, Township 110, Range 54 in Springlake Township, Kingsbury County. Near Whitewood Church.

Born near Hoistrup, in Torslev, Denmark, June 7, 1841 to Jens and Karrie (Jensen) Simonsen.

They had five children: Simon, Jens C., Peter C., Elsie and Christian (the subject of this life sketch).

Christian helped his father farm. And in 1872, his father passed away. The land reverted to him. In 1880 he disposed of the land, and came to the United States, where he settled in South Dakota, SW. of Whitewood Church.

In 1880, married Inger Larson, daughter of Lars and Johanna Larson. Inger was born Feb. 22, 1843 and died in 1934.

They raised a large family, 11 children: Lars (Dec. 29, 1863); Jens Lauris (Nov. 8, 1865, Died 1966); Karrie (May was Mrs. John Kuehn) born Nov. 10, 1867; Soren (Chris, Born Nov. 22, 1869. Died 1918); Anton (Tony, July 17, 1881); Johannas (John, Nov. 23, 1871); Anna S. (Feb. 25, 1875); Neils P. (March 4, 1877); Otilia (Nov. 9, 1879); Anna O. (Born June 2, 1883. Died 1944) (Mrs. L. R. Ledahl); Lewis (Born 1886. Died 1955).

Lewis Jensen farmed the land after his parents moved to Lake Preston, S. Dak. Then moved to a farm near Bryant, S. Dak., where he farmed until the farm was sold. Moved to another farm near Summit, S. Dak. Lewis passed away at Summit of a heart attack. Leaving his wife Della, two sons, Merle and Vernon, both farming in the Waubay and Summit area; two daughters, Joy Olson of De Smet, and June Dowden (now deceased). They lost two other children, Hazel and Jewel.

Jens Jensen bought a farm 1½ miles West of his parents' place. He was 15 years old when he came with his parents to the United States from Jutland.

On July 29, 1902, married Mary Peterson. They built a new house on their property. And on June 12, 1903, Melvin joined the family. On Jan. 22, 1905, a baby girl was born, they called her Myrtle. (Now Mrs. Charlie Lacy of Lake Preston, S. Dak.)

They endured many hardships, and learned to make do with what they had.

On Nov. 21, 1912, another girl arrived, Pearl (Mrs. Leslie Larson of Erwin, S. Dak.).

In 1920, Jens and his family moved into Lake Preston, S. Dak. Buying the Austin House. Just North of the Park.

They remained in Lake Preston the rest of their lives, the last three years in the Manor.

Jens passed away after hip surgery, Oct. 23, 1966. Mary died Sept. 20, 1967.

Soren (Chris) farmed near Oldham, S. Dak. Married Anna Osby. He died early in life, leaving a large family. Some of them live in this area. Christina Millett, Oldham, S. Dak.; Chester Jensen, of Bryant, S. Dak.; Mrs. Alvin Moen, of Arlington, S. Dak.

Johannas (John) owned a farm north of his father's place. West of the Whitewood Church. When they left the farm, they went to Pasadena, Ca., where John did Mason work. Married Mary Ledahl. Had two boys, Maurice and Glenn. Glenn married Lucille Pattee and moved onto his Dad's farm. They has three children. At present, their daughter (Mrs. LeRoy Severson) and

family, live on the home place. Glenn and his wife moved to a farm in the same vicinity.

Anton (Tony) farmed North of Oldham, S. Dak. Married Lilli Jensen of Oldham, S. Dak. They had seven children: Gladys; Laurene (Mrs. Clarence Dahl) of Azusa, Ca.; Leslie of Pomona, Ca.; John, 1917-1935; Wayne; Marvel (Mrs. Francis McGinty); Betty (Mrs. George Stassi), who passed away in January of 1979. Marvel lives S.E. of Lake Preston, S. Dak.

## JULSON FAMILY

By Mrs. Bob [Helen] Hauck, Sr.

My father's grandfather was born in Norway in 1793. His name was Juel Knutson Haavrud. His oldest son, Knud, born on Haavrud in Valdres, Norway in 1823, came to America with his sister in 1848. His father and the rest of the family came in the following year and they settled in Wisconsin. They lived there for 38 years. They changed their name to Juelsson and later shortened it to Julson.

In 1886 the Knud Julsons and 5 daughters and 2 sons moved to Lake Preston and Knud bought a farm southeast of the town. The two sons, John and Otto, lived most of their lives here. Otto was a linotype operator at the Times office for many years. My father farmed the farm until 1892.

John Julson married Sina Lunde, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Lunde. He came to American and settled in Lake Preston in 1881. Then he sent for his family. My mother and father had a family of 11 children through the years—Ella, Clara, Sarah, Esther, Victor, Walter, Marie Helen, Mae who died in infancy, Alice and Ruth. They were all baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran Faith.

After moving from the farm my father was deputy county treasurer and then deputy county auditor. In the early 1900's he was county Surveyor.

My father had a High School education. He was interested in Architecture and completed a correspondence course in that. He had an extensive library and was an avid reader of History.

John Julson was a member of the Lake Preston Board of Trustees and became its president in 1897. He was a member of the Baker Township Board of Supervisors for one year. He joined the Modern Woodmen of America and held the office of W.A. in 1898.

My father had the position of grain buyer for the firm of Cargill and Fall whose elevator and warehouse he operated in Lake Preston. He helped plan the sewer and water system and drew the plat of Lake Preston from which the blueprints have been made down through the years. He was in the machinery business with his brother-in-law, Gunder Lundé, for a time. My father's true ambition was to own and operate a tree nursery in Lake Preston. With this in mind he bought an acreage on the east edge of Lake Preston, across the street and east of the Catholic Church. There, with the help of a man named Carl Peterson, he planted many fruit trees, shade trees and shrubs. He experimented in crossing fruit trees by grafting in order to produce a better fruit. Brookings College kept in touch with him concerning these experiments.

My mother and father spent hours in the evenings planning the 12-room house they planned to build on the acreage. Then my father drew up the plans. When electricity became a reality in Lake Preston, the house







**John Julson, left, county surveyor, and his crew**

was built and we moved to our new home. However, my father's ambition was never to be completely realized. Shortly after we moved, his health began to fail and on December 18, 1911 he died of Cancer a few hours before his 45th birthday.

By this time my two oldest sisters had graduated from Mankato Commercial College and held stenographic positions away from home. My mother, in the true pioneer spirit, raised her family alone. My two brothers

were too young to carry out their father's plans for a nursery so, after a few years, my mother sold the acreage and moved to the home now owned by the Milford Kopperuds. She lived there the rest of her life. One of the things that pleased her very much in her later life was when, at the Methodist Mother and Daughter Banquet, she was named Mother of the Year. She lived to enjoy her many grandchildren and great grandchildren. She died in 1955 at the age of 81.

## **KEITH FAMILY**

**By Elsie Keith Burris**

One of the early pioneer families that settled in the new town of Lake Preston, South Dakota, was the Keith Family. The Great-Grandfather of the present generation, Alonzo A. Keith, was the first to come to Lake Preston. Alonzo Keith and his wife Julia homesteaded in the Dakota Territory, coming to Lake Preston in 1882. They had a claim just to the west edge of Lake Preston where the old Harley Rauch home was located and where the current Lake Preston Supper Club is located.

The home that Harley Rauch tore down recently was the original Keith home in the Lake Preston area. This is the area now known as the Keith Addition to the City of Lake Preston.

Alonzo Keith was born in Winfield, Kerkimer County, New York, in 1817. His wife was also from New York. At the age of 19 Alonzo Keith moved to Elyria, Ohio with his parents. He there attended Oberlin College which was newly organized. He taught school at Elyria, Ohio and then worked with his Father in the Carpenter and Joiner Trade.

In 1845 he located at Johnstown, Rock County, Wisconsin. In 1846 he returned to New York and married his wife to be, Julia McFarland, and then returned with his wife and his sister, Mrs. M. A. Spooner and her family to Johnstown, the then Territory of Wisconsin.

Some of the Spooners came west when Mr. Keith came and they eventually settled mostly in the Brookings area, some of that family still living there.

They homesteaded there in 1846. They lived at Johnstown for 36 years. Alonzo Keith and his wife at the age of 65 moved to Lake Preston, South Dakota, then the Dakota Territory. That was in 1882. They homesteaded here at that time. They became members of the Congregational Church which church and parsonage had just been completed that same year.

Alonzo Keith was very active politically and became a member of the Republican Party when it was organized and remained a member of that party; however, he cast his first vote for Wm. Henry Harrison, Whig Candidate in 1840.

Mr. Keith was very active in the growth and administration of the business of the new town. Both he and his wife were very instrumental in the growth of the new Congregational Church and were very active in the church their entire lives.

Alonzo Keith and his wife Julia were parents of only one child — Irwin Alonzo Keith who was born while they were living in Johnstown, Wisconsin, in 1847. Irwin Alonzo Keith secured his education and grew to manhood while living with his folks at Johnstown, Wisconsin. He married Addie C. Burke at Rochester, New York, in 1872. He and his bride lived at Johnstown but then in 1882 they moved to Bancroft, Iowa, where he became a farmer.





He had studied for the Pharmacy business and had been engaged in that business prior to moving to Iowa. He did not like farming so in the spring of 1883 he came to Lake Preston, one year after his Father and Mother moved to that Territory. He then purchased the drug store which had been established by Mr. Lewis Gerald. At that time there were two drug stores in Lake Preston. One was located on the south end of main street, about 2 or 3 lots north of the corner store.

The original Keith drug store was in a wood frame building located about where the present drug store building is located. When the new brick drug store building was built it was necessary to move the old drug store building out in the street where it was located while the new building was being erected.

Irwin Alonzo Keith, who was known by all as "I. A." Keith, was very active in the pharmaceutical business in the new Territory and was one of the organizers of the South Dakota Pharmaceutical Association in 1885 when he became its Secretary and he held that position for 12 years. He was twice appointed a member of the State Board of Pharmacy Examiners by governors of South Dakota and was highly thought of in his profession.

I. A. Keith was very active in the early Congregational Church as his parents before him had been. They were both very instrumental in the work of the new church in the Territory, and the Church was a very important part of their lives and he lived a life true to his Church beliefs, and was well known for his truth, honesty and integrity in all his dealings. His handshake was considered as good as any legal deed involved in any of his dealings. "I. A." Keith was also one of the organizers and incorporators of the South Dakota Mutual Fire Insurance Company that had its headquarters in Lake Preston. He was Secretary of that organization for 17 years while it was in Lake Preston. "I. A." Keith was very active in the affairs of the State, County, and Town, and in 1896 and 1897 was State Senator from Kingsbury County in the State Legislature. In 1897 he was Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations.

In 1888 "I. A." Keith was elected first Mayor of the newly organized town of Lake Preston, So. Dak. He held that position for several years. He was for many years a member of the Lake Preston Board of Education and was very active in the early school in this area. He was also active in the Odd Fellow and Masonic Lodges.

A written tribute to Mr. I. A. Keith by a friend from Canton, S. Dak., said that Mr. Keith had accomplished more in his short span of life in Lake Preston than most men do in a longer period of time. He was a man interested in all avenues of life in the community, his home life was ideal and his public career was an honor to his city as well as to the State at large.

Mr. Lewis also stated that Mr. I. A. Keith had that force of character that makes for strong friendships and tackling jobs that needed to be done and seeing them through until well done, that he never faltered when convinced he was right but that he was also a humble man and active in his faith and was to be found in church every Sunday.

I. A. Keith died in 1912 at the age of 65 years; however, he was not an old man as life is measured in things done and accomplished for in that respect he more than filled the usual span of human life.

Three children were born to I. A. Keith and his wife Addie. There was a daughter Minnie, born while they



I. A. KEITH,

*Member State Board of Pharmacy.*

LAKE PRESTON

lived in Johnstown, Wisconsin. She was not well and died at the age of 33. A son was also born, Herbert A. Keith, known in the Lake Preston area as "Bert" Keith. "Bert" Keith was also born at Johnstown, Wisconsin in 1874. A sister, Grace Maroa Keith was born to the family in 1892 after the family moved to Lake Preston.

Grace Keith married Samuel Olson, Depot Agent in Lake Preston. To them were born seven children:

Adaline Olson Weiler, Colome, SD  
Grace Lorene Olson Hossle, Winner, SD  
Maxine Olson McCray, Fresno, California  
Irwin A. Olson, 1025 Heartwood, Vallejo, Ca.  
Keith Olson, Deceased 1957  
Maroa Olson Hamann, Clear Lake, SD  
Edward E. Olson, 415 La Jolla St., Vallejo, Ca.

"Bert" Keith grew to manhood and secured his education in the Lake Preston schools and then attended South Dakota State College where he graduated from the Pharmaceutical School and entered into the Drug Store with his Father in the brick building located on the West side of the main street presently occupied by the Swenson Drug Store.

He was united in marriage to May Burton of Lake Preston whose parents owned and operated the Park Hotel at the location presently occupied by the Lake Preston Motel. The old Park Hotel was one of the leading Hotels in this entire area. A large dining room was maintained in this Hotel and People from all over the area went out of their way to come through Lake Preston to stop at the Park Hotel because of the food. Meals were 60c and were full course meals, followed by homemade pies that were known by all the traveling men in the State. It was a social center of the Town.

Six children were born to "Bert" and May Keith, two having died in infancy, but surviving were Randall B. Keith, now deceased, Maroa Keith Blakely, Norman Keith, now deceased, and Elsie Keith Burris.

During the 36 years Bert was in the Drug Store he took an active part also in the State Pharmaceutical Association and was Secretary of that Association, the





same as his Father before him. He retired from the Drug Store in 1935 and was active after that time as County Commissioner, County Auditor and then entered into the men's clothing business and was in that business in the store he built just south of the old drug store, later occupied by Oines Hardware and now a part of the Swenson Drug Store.

During his years in Lake Preston he was active in the Congregational Church and was prominent in the activities of the Odd Fellow, Modern Woodmen and Masonic Lodges. "Bert" was on the City of Lake Preston School Board for 25 years and served as president of that board for many years. He was also a Charter Member of the City Park Board that instigated the building of the Lake Preston Swimming Pool and remained Secretary of that board until the time of his death.

He was active and served on the Lake Preston Cemetery Association for over 40 years. During his later years he also served as Mayor of the City and also as head of the Office of Price Administration for this area during the World War II Years. He served in World War I. "Bert" Keith was also active for many years in the Lake Preston Building and Loan Association with Melvin Langlie who later moved to California and wanted Bert to go along with him at that time but Bert decided his place was in Lake Preston.

Their efforts through the Building and Loan Association for many years aided in salvaging the investments of many of the members during the depression years of the 1930's.

Bert Keith was a member of the Lake Preston Volunteer Fire Department for 39 years. Bert Keith's contribution to the City and the area can well be described by an Editorial written at the time of his death:

#### **H. A. KEITH**

**In the passing of H. A. Keith, Lake Preston suffered the loss of a citizen whose influence and whose work in the community ranks among the greatest of anyone who has ever lived and worked here during the course of the history of the city.**

**To operate a business in the community, such as a drug store, for a period of 36 years in itself would be worthy of comment. But when one lists the many duties and positions of trust and responsibility which were held by Mr. Keith during his lifetime at Lake Preston, one sees him as a benefactor of the city who gave much of his time and energy to the welfare of its citizens and his fellowmen.**

**The contribution in many instances is immeasurable. Who can measure the service given by a man as a member of the board of education for 25 years? Or as secretary of the park board for more than 25 years? Or as a member of the Volunteer Fire Department for 39 years? Or secretary-treasurer of the Lake Preston Building and Loan association for many years? Or for the more than 50 years of service and activity in the Masonic Lodge and the years of activity and membership of the Odd Fellow and Modern Woodmen lodges? Or his activities surrounding his church membership? Or his years as mayor of Lake Preston, head of the Kingsbury county Office of Price Administration, County Commissioner, County Auditor?**

**If a man had been active in one or two of the civic and community enterprises listed, he would**

**have accomplished a notable service. "Bert" Keith's record would be difficult to duplicate.**

**The entire citizenry of Lake Preston and its surrounding community and county mourn deeply the loss of this beloved citizen and benefactor.**

## **NELS KNUTSON FAMILY**

**As recorded April 15, 1966, as a term paper in history by Cheryl Lolling [Kortan], a junior in Erwin High School at the time.**

### **"MY FAMILY TREE"**

The following is a brief outline of the Knutson family tree. The descendants described begin with my great grandparents and continue in a direct line to my generation. Numerous cousins of my mother, a great aunt, and three uncles are still living within this community.

In 1870, among other immigrants, were a party of friends who sailed from Voss, Norway. They arrived in Chicago in July and two of those friends were married in August. A courtship had evidently been carried on during the voyage. This couple were my great grandmother and great grandfather Nels B. Knutson.

My great grandparents lived on a farm near Chicago for 10 years. Adventure was still in their blood, so they set out for the West with a covered wagon, which contained all their belongings, and two oxen named Buck and Brite. There were cows, sheep, hogs, and chickens walking behind. They pushed westward until my great grandmother could no longer travel. The North Preston community was the site of their homestead which was established on March 9, 1880. This area was called Kingsbury County, Dakota Territory. A family of ten children, except for one dying in infancy, were raised by the couple.

Volga was the nearest supply center, as it was as far as the railroad extended. A trip to Volga took my great grandfather at least a week and he secured provisions for about six months.

Their buildings, frame structures, were built entirely by themselves. The house consisted of a wooden frame, the roof and sides of which were filled in with sod. The windows, with a glass pane approximately in the center, were about two feet deep. The floor was wooden. These buildings were warm in winter and cool during the summer months.

When the coal supply was exhausted, hay was twisted and burned. Their crops made them self-sufficient. The earthen cellar, a hole under the house, was the most important place of storage. Most was preserved in salt brine. The wool from sheep was washed, carded, and spun into yarn. The yarn was then knitted into clothing.

Game, such as rabbits, prairie chickens, and grouse, were important sources of meat. Coyotes and wolves freely roamed the prairies and could often be heard at night.

My great grandmother was a midwife and aided in the treating of any sicknesses. She had the first sewing machine in North Preston.

During the blizzard of 1888 ropes were tied to the man when they went outside. A hole had to be cut in the roof of the barn in order to get in to tend the animals. The children were put to bed to keep warm.

The school was used for holding church services





until enough settlers moved in to make it possible to build a church. My great aunts and uncles did not attend high school, but went to Brookings to State College for short courses such as engineering or domestic science. These courses lasted about 3 or 4 months. My grandmother attended Lutheran Normal in Madison, Minnesota to complete her education, though. She, as well as my mother, were teachers for several years.

My great uncle Nutie and his family took the train to Pierre and then went by covered wagon to Midland. Here they homesteaded for several years, but eventually returned to the North Preston vicinity. While out west of the river, he traveled to Philip for supplies, which was usually a three day trip. Their house was a sod hut which was usually whitewashed on the inside. Kerosene lamps were the only means of lighting. Rattlesnakes were numerous; but buffalos were already rounded up.

My grandparents, Arthur and Nellie Kopperud, were married January 5, 1910, in the North Preston church. My mother has 10 brothers and sisters. They, too, used kerosene lamps until my grandparents installed their own light plant in 1920.

Thirty loaves of bread a week were made by my grandmother. Cream was churned into butter in a barrel churn. A seamstress came twice a year and made each of the children about three outfits. One was used for dress and the other two for school.

The early powered tools and machines were often safety hazards. One of my aunts lost her finger in the gears of a washing machine which was driven by a gas motor. My grandmother lost the end of her finger in an electrically powered meat grinder.

Only my grandparents deep religious convictions enabled them to continue through drouth, depression, and other hardships.

As children going to country school, my mother and her brothers and sisters carried their lunch in pails and either walked or rode horseback. To go to high school, they walked across Lake Preston when it was frozen or around it otherwise. Her parents owned a car, a Maxwell touring, but it was only possible to drive it in warm, dry weather.

Neighborhood parties sometimes were used to break the tedious routines. They were centered around such activities as bobsledding, make homemade ice cream, board riding, or playing cards. A Saturday night trip to town during the summer was the highlight of the week.

On November 26, 1942, my parents, the Vincent Lollings, were married in Oregon, Illinois. After spending 18 years there, we moved to South Dakota in 1960.

In this period of almost a hundred years, people have advanced from sod houses with kerosene lamps and sod roofs and walls to modern, convenient, comfortable homes. As each need arises, an invention is developed to fill that need. With each invention one step further is taken toward the advancement of our living standards.

## NUTIE KNUTSON FAMILY

By Mrs. Leo Johnson

Nutie Knutson, born to Nels and Maglie Knutson at Newark, Ill., on December 14, 1875, was a pioneer resident of Kingsbury county, having come to Dakota Territory in the year 1879, at the age of 4.

With his parents and three brothers, they traveled

from Illinois in a covered wagon, bringing all their belongings with them. When they had come as far as what is now the Don Nelson farm, 7 miles northeast of Lake Preston, they decided to stay, and on that land they homesteaded.

This land remained in the family for about 60 years. Nutie attended grade school in what was known as the "double school," Baker No. 6. He also attended school in Brookings, taking a course in engineering. As a young man he owned and operated various steam threshing rigs and did many years of threshing in the community.

He was a member of the North Preston Church all his life, with the exception of a few years when he lived elsewhere. In 1901 he was married to Louise Limbo and to them 8 children were born, all now living with the exception of one daughter, Agnes, who died in 1971.

In 1906 he homesteaded in Stanley county where he, with his family, resided 9 years, returning to the North Preston community in the fall of 1916 to take over the homestead farm and to provide a home for his aged father. However, his father lived only until the following April, which changed circumstances.

Having previously purchased a tract of land, in 1920 he erected the buildings and planted the trees on the farm where Dennis Nelson, a great grandson, now lives. This farm is now owned by his granddaughter and husband, the Wendell Nelsons.

Mr. Knutson was active in various community affairs, was township supervisor and other offices of similar nature.

Mrs. Knutson, known as Lizzie Knutson, was a daughter of Lauritz and Karen Limbo. She was born in Dane county, Wisconsin, in 1882 and lived to be a few weeks short of 91 years. At the age of 7 she came with her parents to the North Preston community and except for 9 years on their homestead in Stanley county, lived in this community all her life. Her parents and the Evan Nettums, who were friends of her parents in Dane county, came to South Dakota and together settled on adjoining 80 acres of land, building each a sod house and other shelter needed. This land is now owned by Elmer Nelson, joining his farm on the east.

Mrs. Knutson also attended the double school, Baker No. 6. In all, four generations of the family attended the school—Lizzie Knutson, her daughter Myrtle (Mrs. Ole Lakness), her granddaughter Helen (Mrs. Wendell Nelson) and her great grandson, David Nelson.

When Mr. and Mrs. Knutson homesteaded in Stanley county, 40 miles from Midland, the nearest town, he left his family here while he built a two-room, tar-papered dwelling, and a stable. When preparations were complete for the new home, Mrs. Knutson and their four children boarded the train at Lake Preston and were met at Pierre by Mr. Knutson. They continued a two-day trip in a covered wagon, stopping at a road house overnight.

While there Mr. Knutson, along with other homesteaders, was instrumental in organizing a school. Mr. and Mrs. Knutson were charter members of the Deep Creek Lutheran Church, this congregation celebrating its 70th anniversary in 1978.

All the Knutson children continue to live in this community with the exception of Mrs. Marvin (Ruby) Remme who lives in New Brighton, Mn. Those living here are Luella Gunderson, Myrtle Lakness, Milford Knutson, Mrs. Leo (Hazel) Johnson, Vernon Knutson and





Mrs. Dale (Ruth) Olson.

Mrs. Knutson died June 27, 1973. Nutie Knutson died August 31, 1940.

## ARTHUR KOPPERUD FAMILY

By Alice Lolling

Arthur Kopperud was born in Mathews township, De Smet, July 11, 1884 to Niels and Mary Kopperud. His parents were Norwegian immigrants who took a land claim of 480 Acres in the sandy soil south of De Smet in 1879.

In 1900 Niels Kopperud purchased the G. W. Foster farm on the north side of Lake Preston and the family moved there.

Arthur took a homestead at Brose, N.D., in 1904-05.

He married Nellie Knutson of North Preston vicinity January 5, 1910. Her parents, too, were Norwegian immigrants who came by covered wagon from Illinois in 1880. They settled on a homestead in North Preston where Donald Nelson now lives.

Arthur took over the farm and his parents moved to Lake Preston. Arthur and Nellie lived there except the four years Arthur was county auditor, 1936-1940. Now it is Roy's and Nels' home.

Arthur was instrumental in organizing the Lake Preston creamery January 11, 1935, and was first to sign the corporate seal January 31, 1935. He served as president of the creamery board, except from 1935-37, until his death in 1949.

He was Baker township clerk 33 years. He was an officer, director and board member of various organizations, such as Farmers Union, Farm Bureau, Huron PCA, war rationing board, served in various offices in church organizations and was trustee many years.

He passed away Sept. 1, 1949. Nellie passed away Nov. 25, 1958.

Arthur and Nellie had eleven children, all still living, all Lake Preston High School graduates: Roy, Nels, Milford and Alice Lolling, of Lake Preston; Herbert, Palmer, Alaska; Mildred Satrum, Downey, Ca.; Lillian Hagg, Madison, S.D.; Gladys Arneson, Bellevue, Wa.; LaVerne Aslesen, Hanford, Ca.; Dorothy Christensen, Viborg, S.D.; and Nellie Ann Pederson, Mt. Vernon, Wa.

There are 30 grandchildren and four step-grandchildren.

## NIELS KOPPERUD FAMILY

By Harmon Kopperud

I know very little about my grandparents except Grandmother Hanson on my mother's side. She was left an orphan at the age of 15 so experienced many hardships as a young girl. She had to make a living and try to get an education. She was a very practical and hard working person. She was born in Drammen, Norway. I was there over 30 years ago and it is a beautiful city over-looking the Bay.

At the age of 17 to get away from the hard work she married Grandpa who was 10 years older. They had four boys and two girls; my mother's name was Mary. The oldest brother was Ole Hanson and when my mother was 15 years old she wanted to come to America so her brother Ole sent for her. Her first job was working in a boarding house and most of the people there were from Norway and the men worked on the Great Lakes.

It was there she met my Dad who worked for her brother, Ole Hanson. He got her a job in a German home where she learned German and English. She got the languages mixed up so her brother got her a job in a Judge's home and the salary was \$1.50 a week. They fell in love and got married. I told my mother I thanked God she chose my Dad for no one could have had a more Christian home than we had.

It was the custom in Norway at that early time for a family that moved from one farm to another to take the name of the farm to which they moved. Any son whose father's name was Hans Olson would have as his name Hanson because he was a son of Hans. The Kopperud name was the name of the farm, otherwise our name would be Nielson. If a man married a widow who owned a farm, he would assume the surname of the dead husband.

My father, Niels Kopperud, was born November 24, 1853, near Lier, Norway and came to the United States when he was 18 years old so that he could have more opportunity for the future. He arrived in Milwaukee where he got a job with Captain Ole Hanson as a sailor on Lake Michigan. Captain Hanson later became his brother-in-law. Dad passed away June 10, 1917.

My mother, Mary Hanson, was born on a farm near Drammen, Norway, on January 28, 1857. At the age of 15 she came to the United States with her three older brothers and landed in Milwaukee. She met Dad while he was working for her brother, Captain Hanson. They were married in Canby, Minn., while on a visit to mother's brother.

In the fall of 1878 Dad heard about the free land in South Dakota and could have filed a homestead in Brookings County, but only for 160 acres on very good land. So he decided to go on to Kingsbury County where he could get 320 acres plus a tree claim for a total of 480 acres and picked land near Lake Henry, about 6 miles southeast of De Smet.

At that time he did not understand much about land as this was much lighter soil than Brookings County. At that time the nearest railroad was Tracy, Minn. He returned to Milwaukee to work and came back in the spring of 1879 to build a small shanty house which was all he had to start with.

The nearest railroad then was Volga. He would walk to Volga, 30 miles from home, for groceries and supplies. Once they got caught in a snowstorm and on the way back had to spend the night close to Lake Henry by a big tree and piled up snow for protection.

I was born June 20, 1895, on the homestead south of De Smet. When I was four years old I was in a barn that burned down and my father and oldest brother knew I was in the barn and they could not open the large doors. A few minutes later I came out the same door without any help. I was badly burned and my mother could not stand to dress the many burns so her sister, Aunt Hannah Ammundson, took care of me for many months. With hope and many prayers, God let me live through this experience.

Then at the age of five, I put my hand in a pulley when they were putting up hay and am minus a joint in a finger. In 1900 my parents sold the six quarters of land, purchased 320 acres north of Lake Preston where Roy and Nels now live.

My first memory of any event in history was when President McKinley was killed in September of 1901. I was six years old and went to school in a one-story





building across the street from the present school. Later this building was cut in half and one-half is the present home of R. Needham and the other half was the late Jens Erie home.

When I was a youngster I milked cows every morning and night and took the milk cans to the creamery with a horse and spring wagon and left for school and Mr. Anderson (Bernice Kopperud's father) would unload the milk cans and send the horse home by itself. I well remember picking cow chips and corn cobs that were burned in the stove. The hard coal heater was used only in the middle of the winter and on holidays. I recall getting lights and how happy we all were to get rid of the kerosene lamps.

When Lake Preston was frozen over I remember ice races with horses. John Lawler had his favorite horse and the events were well attended. Hub Jones would take ice out of the ditches for storage in his ice house for summer use. He had cut a big hole in one ditch and I was skating home after school and fell into the lake and under the ice. I was lucky to crawl back under the ice and get out.

My parents spoke Norwegian when I was young and I was confirmed in Norwegian by Rev. Dahl in 1910. My parents took two papers printed in Norwegian and I recall going to the mail box to get the Schandamivan and Decorah Posten.

I finished high school in the class of 1913. There are only three of us left. My favorite teacher was Dr. Alvin Hanson who became head of the economics department at Harvard University and was the economic adviser to the Federal Reserve in Washington and chairman of the brain trust under President Roosevelt. I started college in 1913.



**Harmon Kopperud**

(Editor's Note—the Kopperud family history continues in the form of a report by Hazel Baldwin. This report is part of a project conducted a few years ago by the Senior Civic Club. The project consisted of taped

interviews with community pioneers, made in the interest of preserving the history of the community. Mrs. Baldwin's report on Harmon Kopperud's community activities follows.)

In 1913 Harmon enlisted in the National Guard and in 1916 saw active service along the Mexican border. In later years this group of men who had served together decided to form an organization which they called "Silver Wings" and they meet once a year in June and Harmon always attends. Men of a similar organization are very active in Arizona where the Kopperuds spend their winters, and Harmon has identified himself with this group.

In 1917 he graduated from State College at Brookings. Because of his war service he had to be tutored in order to graduate with the class with which he started. While in college he was editor of the Jackrabbit and of the Collegian.

In 1920 he proved up on a homestead along the Wyoming and South Dakota border. Following this he lived for several years in Garden City, acting as a receiver of closed banks, and for several years was associated with his brother Andrew in a bank in Webster. In 1923 he married May Erickson of Bryant. They had a family of 5 children, three girls and two boys, four of whom are living.

In the fall of 1925 Harmon and May came to Lake Preston where he bought controlling interest in the Community State Bank, and early in 1926, became the manager. In 1943 his son James became an active member of the bank family and this fine father and son relationship continued as long as they were in business. Harmon mentions Gordon Maxam with almost fatherly affection. He says Gordon worked for him for 20 years and was honest and very loyal to him personally and to the bank.

Harmon mentions another friend, E. F. Green, a De Smet attorney who was also most helpful in his younger years. Mr. Green told him that a motto given him as a young man had much meaning to him, and this motto was "Row your boat close to shore." This motto seems to have guided him in many of his decisions. And he said Otto Thorsnes was always most helpful and a friend to be proud of.

Harmon also acquired banking interests in Watertown, Oldham and Hayti.

He closed our visit by saying that of the various projects with which he had been associated in Lake Preston he thought the one of which he was most proud and most happy is the Kingsbury Memorial Manor.

In 1967 the bank built a very modern attractive building south of the theater. In 1970 the Community State Bank merged with the Northwestern National Bank of Sioux Falls. James went to work in the Sioux Falls bank but Harmon remained active for two more years with the bank here and then retired.

May and Harmon celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1973 with open house hosted by their family. They spend their summers in Lake Preston and at their cottage on Lake Poinsett, and their winters in Sun City, Ariz.

In 1975 Harmon celebrated his 80th birthday with open house at the Lutheran Church in Lake Preston, where he was greeted by hundreds of old friends.

Lake Preston is a better place in which to live because Harmon Kopperud passed this way.





## PETER LARSEN

By Frank Larsen

The early history of the meat business in Lake Preston is synonymous with one of the city's pioneer business men, Peter Larsen, my father.

After arriving from Denmark as a newcomer to this country about 1904, he worked for Hoberg and Berge. About 1915 he purchased Mr. Berge's interest in the business and later, in 1917, became sole owner when he bought Mr. Hoberg's interest.

He continued as sole owner until I joined him in the business. For many years after this, he continued to be of assistance whenever the work load was heavy.

The original site of Larsen's Market was a frame building located where the south half of Koch's Meat Market now stands. The walk-in cooler of this early establishment was cooled by large chunks of ice which had to be manually elevated to overhead troughs above the tracks.

In cold winter weather the building was allowed to cool down to uncomfortable levels in order to better keep the meat from spoiling. It was not uncommon for meat to freeze in the ice-refrigerated showcase during a cold winter night.

During the early 1920's "Pete" relocated his business to a new building he had built on what is now the north half of Koch's Meat Market. This new facility was considered one of the finest meat facilities in the area. New mechanical refrigeration replaced the old ice-age type of refrigeration.

About this same time "Pete" had acquired land on the east edge of town where he located his new slaughtering facility and feed yards. His feed yards became a ready source of supply for Larsen's Market. His

intense interest in livestock feeding and farming was inspiring and he was often helpful to others by providing knowledge of his experiences.

Besides being active as a business man and farmer, he contributed much to the Lake Preston community.

During the depression years, working against impossible odds, he and a small group of business men pooled their resources to build two buildings on the west side of Main street. These buildings presently house Delbert's Clover Farm grocery and Thomas Hardware.

It was during these years that Lake Preston's Watermelon Day was the largest community event in eastern South Dakota, and "Pete" was always active in the event.

His interest in community affairs went beyond the commercial. He was a member of the school board for many years and served as its president during part of that time.

During more recent years he was a major contributor in the community effort that resulted in construction of Kingsbury Manor and hospital. In recognition of his interest and contribution to the project, one wing of Kingsbury Manor has been named in his honor.

At age 94 he still has a deep interest and concern for his community.

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## LARSON FAMILY

By Lillian Larson

Do we take our environment too much for granted? Do we realize what our parents and grandparents had to suffer to make this the beautiful country we now have? These pioneers are leaving us all too quickly. In order to have my children and grandchildren know what these



Larsen's Meat Market in the early days, Peter at left and at right his helper, Carl Olson.





pioneers had to go through, I want to tell them the story of Mr. and Mrs. Ole Larson.

Mrs. Cobiah (Jurgenson) Larson came to America from Jylland, Denmark and Ole Larson came from Biri, Norway. They moved to America in 1868 with their parents. They moved to Blooming Prairie, Minnesota. They were married in 1878 and wanted to have a home of their own and when they heard Dakota Territory was opened for homesteading they decided to move west where there was more opportunity to expand.

In 1880 they loaded what little furniture and belongings they had into a wagon pulled by a team of horses. They tied their cow behind the wagon and that way had milk for their use. They came to the locality of Lake Preston, although the town was not built up until later. They filed on a quarter of land south-west of Lake Preston, and built a sod house which was later replaced by a claim shanty made of cheap lumber and only had a dirt floor.

Their greatest problem was the winter of 1880. Snow came in October and stayed until late spring. One blizzard followed another and trains could not run to bring in coal, flour, and other supplies. Ole Larson had a good team of horses and in order to make a little money, which was very hard to get, he would break sod for neighbors. He would go as far as De Smet to work and on Saturday night he would walk home and leave his horses in De Smet to rest over Sunday. In the winter of 1880 the snow got so deep the train had to quit running and he had the only team that could stand the trip. So he drove to Tyler, Minnesota, and brought back a load of flour and supplies for the neighborhood. Before spring the flour was gone, and it was impossible to go after more. The people had to grind their seed wheat on little hand coffee grinders and made coarse brown bread to keep alive. They twisted hay into "sticks" to burn to keep from freezing. Some folks had straw burners which were very dangerous. If the straw was packed too tight a gas would form. One family in the neighborhood, the Hansons, packed straw in the straw burner in the evening and went to bed. During the night gas formed while the family of nine were asleep. When the neighbors came by and investigated in the morning, Olaf was the only survivor of the Hanson family.

Another problem was the absence of doctors. Two of the Larson children, Lena and Lewis, died of diphtheria because there was no doctor to help. There were no cemeteries, so they were buried on a corner of the farm and others were buried there too. The plot was kept up until in later years when the farm was sold. The greed for a few more acres caused it to be plowed over and the markers destroyed.

There were no churches at first, so the gatherings and prayer meetings were held in the homes. Later schools were built and were used for church meetings also. Traveling preachers came through on horseback and held services.

The Larsons had seven other children. Arnold, Mae (Gomsrud), George, Percy, Clara (Erie), Minnie (Marek), and Melvin all settled around Lake Preston. Most of these have passed on, so there will be no one to tell the Pioneer story.

Let us appreciate the heritage the pioneers left us.

## JEPPE & SOREN LARSON FAMILY

Submitted by Mrs. Leslie Larson

Born at Tverete, Denmark. To Lars and Margretta Jepsen.

In 1879, they came, with their parents, a brother Knute and a sister, to the United States.

Established temporary residence in Freeborn County, Minnesota. Near Albert Lea.

When they came to the United States, they changed their name, from Jeppe Jepsen to Jeppe Larson.

In 1881, two brothers came to S. Dak. to homestead, in Northeastern Hartland Township.

Soren Christian was the second son. Born Sept. 26, 1851 and Died Oct. 13, 1937.

Jeppe Larson filed claim on the East half of S.W. quarter of Section 7 in Township 112, North Range 54. Paid \$144.57, \$1 per Acre. In 1880.

In 1890, Jeppe married Hannah Beck. Hannah was born in Denmark Feb. 22, 1858. And died July 1, 1897 of Blood poisoning.

Jeppe Larson, Born 1851, and Died March, 1904. Suffered a stroke, and was in a wheel chair for many years. In 1904, Francis, his youngest son, took him to San Antonio, Texas where he passed away.

Leaving John, his wife's son, that he adopted, Anna Margate (blind at 13), and Francis.

Francis Larson (second generation) on the farm. Born Aug. 10, 1889. Died July 4, 1972.

Married Mildred Coulson Nov. 30, 1911. Mildred born Aug. 7, 1890. Passed away May 5, 1965.

They had four children, Leslie Edward, Clifford Leroy, Ruth Mildred, and Marion Frances.

In 1928, moved to a farm 2 miles South of Lake Preston, S. Dak.

On 1943, his son Clifford and family moved onto this farm. And still live there.

Francis and Mildred farmed the Homestead from 1909 to 1928. In 1943, they moved into Lake Preston, S. Dak., buying Phil Murphy's house. They lived in Lake Preston their remaining years.

Leslie Larson (3rd generation), Born Sept. 12, 1912 on the Larson homestead East of Erwin, S. Dak.

In 1933, Leslie moved onto the homestead where he batched for two years.

On Sept. 12, 1936, married Pearl Jensen of Lake Preston, S Dak.

The Dirty Thirties were being felt in this area, so along with many other, knew the sting of no crops, and the hardships that go along with it.

In 1976, Leslie retired from farming. Remained on the farm and their son Dale continued farming the land.

Dale Allen Larson (4th generation), Born June 8, 1943. Married Gloria Warner Oct. 1961. They had four children, Larry, David, Joann, and Beverly (passed away).

Larry and David are old enough to help their Dad farm the land, the fifth generation to work the Larson Homestead.

## LEWIS FAMILY

By Agnes Lewis

One of my Minneapolis friends told me one day that she had met a woman who told her she had been a teacher in a small town in South Dakota — Lake Preston by name. My friend asked this ex-teacher if she know a





Lewis family in that town, to which the teacher answered, "Which one — the town was full of them." It was.

It all began in March, 1880, when my Uncle Ben came from Minnesota by railroad to the town of Volga, which was the end of the railroad. He walked across the unbroken prairie to Kingsbury County. There he filed a claim on a quarter section of land four miles north of a post office named Preston. This post office had been established in June 1879 on the bank of Lake Preston, a mile and a half east of the present town site.

In September, 1880, his brother, Knute, joined him and they established the first general store in the town, calling it Knute Lewis & Bro. When the railroad came through, the town was moved west to its present site, and the Lewis brothers moved their stock into a new building, which became the first store in Lake Preston.

In July, 1881, their brother, James, came to the town, filing a claim on a farm a mile and a half south of town. In November of that year, his fiancée, Emelia Matson, came to the town, and they were married — the first wedding in Baker Township, and among the first weddings in the county. Uncle James is said to have been the first man to hitch a team on the streets of Lake Preston, and the first drayman in the town.

1881 is famous for its blizzard, which started with a bang on October 15, 1880 and kept on intermittently until the middle of April. No trains came through from Christmas time until May 6. During that winter, Uncle Knute went to visit his sister in Minnesota, going on skis as far as Sleepy Eye, then taking the train from there. When he started back, he found he could get a train only as far as Tracy, and had to walk the rest of the way, sometimes walking on drifts as high as the telegraph poles along the railroad track. That same winter Uncle Ben walked on snow shoes to Volga to get the mail when one train got through in December 1880.

The sister Uncle Knute visited was Mrs. Mary Lewis Bjordahl, who, with her husband, Markus Bjordahl and two sons, came to Lake Preston later that year. There was evidently an epidemic of diphtheria in 1883, and her two older sons died just one month apart. She had a third son, born in December, 1883, who died of the same disease in April, 1884, followed by his father, who died of "consumption" in 1885. The graves of all four are among the first in the Lake Preston cemetery, just to the left as you enter the main gate. In 1888, Aunt Mary married Hellek Brekke, and their son, James still lives in Lake Preston. Also their daughter-in-law, Mable, grandson, Dale, and his daughter, Suzanne.

My father, John Lewis, came to Lake Preston in 1882 to manage the store for his brothers. His sister, Maria, and her husband, Martin Matson (who was a brother of James Lewis' wife) came in 1886, and Elizabeth Lewis joined her brothers and sisters in 1887. The Matsons settled on a farm south of town, and the Brekkes lived on the farm on the shore of Lake Whitewood where Dale still lives. Uncle Ole Lewis also came in 1882.

During the second famous blizzard, in 1888, Elizabeth was teaching school and had to keep her pupils in the schoolhouse out on the prairie all night, waiting until the parents could come for them in bobsleighs the following morning.

Even Lewis also came to Lake Preston in 1886, so at one time there were six Lewis brothers living in town,

two sisters on farms just out of town and a third sister teaching school. So it is not strange that in 1892 their parents decided to follow their children west.

But their name was not Lewis. They were Lars and Marit Julsdatter Olson, who had emigrated to Dane County, Wisconsin (Madison is the county seat) in 1846 and 1848 respectively. How come a couple named Olson had 11 children named Lewis? In those days in Norway, sons customarily added the suffix "son" to their father's first name, and daughters added "datter". Therefore, the sons of Lars and Marit Olson would have been called "Larson" and the daughters "Larsdatter". Uncle Knute said he could remember being called Knute Larson when he first went to school. But Dane County was full of Larsons and Olsons. So the children of Lars and Marit simply took the Americanized form of Lars, Lewis, as their surname. I doubt if they ever went through any legal steps to make the change, but we are all Lewises. And everyone in Lake Preston called our grandparents Grandpa and Grandma Lewis.

Marit Olson's brother, Knute Julson, had come to Lake Preston in 1886, and that may also have influenced their coming to the town.

Not all the Lewises stayed in Lake Preston all the time. Uncle James moved to Langford in 1902 and Uncle Ole to Canada the same year. But both came back. Uncle James had a furniture and undertaking business in Langford, and in 1906 he came back to Lake Preston and established the same kind of business there, with his son, Leander, as the undertaker. Lee, as he was known, continued in that business until he sold his mortuary to Johnson-Henry in 1957. Lee retired from the furniture business in 1962, having spent 55 years on Main Street.

In 1896 or 1897 Even was elected to a county office and moved to De Smet and from there to Henry. He never again lived in Lake Preston, finally moving to California. Uncle Ole left Canada for Minnesota, lived there several years and finally came back to Lake Preston to spend his last years with the James Matson family. When Aunt Elizabeth married in 1893, she and her husband moved to Wheeler, South Dakota.

When A. C. Lindner, the brother-in-law of Ben Lewis, joined the store, the firm became Lewis Bros. & Lindner, and continued in business until 1907, with John Lewis as manager. But father's health wasn't good and the doctor advised him to retire from inside work and spend most of his time in the outdoors. So in 1907 he bought six acres of land from his father's estate at the south-east edge of town and that summer he and I (I was three years old at the time) built a house and he planted an orchard and a market garden. (If anyone wonders how a three-year old could "help" build a house, I know I must have had father and Jake Hauskey and Pete Sterud climbing the walls almost every day because I can remember climbing on the scaffolding and sitting on the ground putting the "curls" from the boards the carpenters planed on my matching tow head.) LeRoy Collin now lives in the house.

Shortly after father retired, they sold the store. Uncle Ben managed his farms, and Uncle Knute farmed his father's farm next door to our house, and raised Percheron horses and showed them at the State Fair every year. He also was quite active politically, running for governor on the Prohibition ticket in 1906 and serving on the Constitutional Convention in Sioux Falls. He was also a member of the first state Legislative body that met





at Yankton and elected representatives to Congress. Although these representatives went to Washington, they were not allowed to take part in the sessions until South Dakota became a state in 1889.

The Lewis brothers were all single when they came to Lake Preston but they all married in the 1880's and 1890's. At one time when we were growing up, there were 21 Lewis cousins in the area — 10 of us bearing the name of Lewis, and seven Matsons and four Brekkes in the country. And when the Lewises and their cousins the Julsons all got together, there was really a crowd!

Today there isn't a single descendant named Lewis living in Lake Preston, though there are still James Brekke, Dale and Suzanne, Maurice Matson living near Hetland and his brother, Art who spends most of his summers there, representing the family.

We are a long lived family. Grandfather was 83 when he died in 1905, which was very old for that time. My father was only 58, but most of his brothers and sisters lived to be in their late 80's or 90's. They lived to see the town begin to grow from a mere wide spot on the prairie to the prosperous little city it is today, with a swimming pool, an award winning band, a basketball team that almost won the state championship, and an excellent educational system.

We, the Lewises of today, are proud of the town we grew up in, and proud of the part our ancestors played in making it what it is today.

## FREMONT NELSON FAMILY

### PIONEER DAYS OF FREMONT NELSON

[father of Achsa Nelson (Beck) ], written

by Mrs. LeRoy Pederson (nee Jean Beck)

Fremont and Isaiah Nelson came to Dakota Territory in 1879 and filed on homesteads. They returned to Illinois for the winter and brought out their farm equipment in the spring of 1880. They had a team of horses and a cow and Fremont had given his father, Lars Nelson of Newark, Kendal County, Ill., his note for one hundred dollars, to finance them until they could raise a crop.

These brothers took homesteads joining, five miles N.W. of Hetland. The sod house was built on Fremont's quarter section and the barn on Isaiah's claim, just across the road. The sod house had nothing but a dirt floor; however, it was boarded up inside with rough lumber which had been hauled from Volga, the nearest railroad station.

The first winter, Fremont tells of a gopher that lived in the walls of their house all winter and fed on the crumbs from their table. Most any morning they could look to the northwest on a southeastern slope of the Seipp claim and see a flock of antelope that wintered there and were very tame.

They managed to break a little sod each year and plant a little grain, but there were no great returns at first and when the great blizzard (1888) came, many of them were short of flour so the coffee grinder was "borrowed" around to neighbors, corn meal and graham meal were ground in it. Many said they were fools to even try to stay in such a country.

As time went on and each began to accumulate a little "financial backing", they each built a home for themselves. Then Isaiah was married to Mary Gunderson on March 9, 1886 and later Fremont married the school

teacher, Janette Hart Colburn on March 27, 1889.

By hard work, long work days, and meager living they began to prosper. Fremont also planted and acquired a tree claim of 80 acres. Isaiah was more of a stock buyer.

Fremont was a painter and carpenter, so in spare time during the year he often found outside jobs to help with expenses. He also brought with him from his home in Illinois a large box of books which were loaned to his neighbors. He was a taxidermist and mounted several birds, but it was very hard for him to kill a song bird so his collection consisted mostly of hawks, black birds, and owls. He also mounted a white crane, which stood in the Hetland Drug Store for several years.

Because he thought so much of birds, he planted a nice grove of trees and from these seedlings he sold many of the ash trees which now stand in the yards at Lake Preston and Hetland. The trees on the school grounds in Lake Preston were bought as seedlings from him. The street bordering the west side of the school grounds, thus, being named Fremont Ave. And today a granddaughter, Helen-Marie Webster, and a great granddaughter, Mrs. Darwin Tvinnereim, live on Fremont Ave.

He had several fruit trees, raspberry, currant, and gooseberry bushes, and even a Richmond cherry tree, which really had cherries on it although even now it is considered too far north for Richmond Cherries.

There were three children, Achsa, Lester, and William — two boys and a girl and they can remember the long evenings when their mother helped Dad with the chores and often it would be dark before they were through; but the children would sit and watch the red coals in the kitchen stove with its hearth front. Then when supper was over Dad would play "hide and seek" with them and often Mother played too or she would read or sing for them.

The teacher usually stayed with them as the school house was only a quarter of a mile from their house. Mrs. Fremont Nelson had taught school at Ree Heights before her marriage and so her three youngsters were taught their A B C's before they started school. She also organized a Sunday School in the school house and was superintendent of same at the time of her death. (This school house was later known as the Wonsbeck school.)

The Christmas of 1894 was a hard one to face as there had been so little crops so for a Christmas tree there was a branch of an ash tree set upright in a hod of hard coal, with some popcorn strings, a few cranberries (also strung) and bits of bright cloth to decorate the tree. The oldest boy (Lester) received a broom-stick horse with a horse's head carved from wood, the baby (William) had a hand carved pig, and Achsa — a doll made by covering a bottle and using a cloth face and head. I truly believe these children were happier than many with their boughten toys.

Fremont always loved to read so he was a constant subscriber to "The Weekly Inter Ocean" from Chicago, Ill., and also "The Orange Judd Farmer." Because of his reading he had decided it was probably wise to start a foundation of full-blood stock. He bought a full-blood Shorthorn heifer from the Agricultural College at Brookings and used her as a foundation for an anticipated herd, likewise he had started with Percheron horses, Poland China hogs, Barred Rock chickens, and a





shepherd dog, white Pekin ducks and Bronz Bourbon turkeys.

Although there was no way of canning fresh meat in those days, they always had cured meats, fresh chicken and other fowl. There was a smoke house in the grove of trees just north of the house and in this were cured the hams and shoulders of pork and plenty of dried beef.

Then there was the corned beef and salt pork. Each summer a large garden from which plenty of tomatoes were canned and made into preserves, corn and peas were dried, navy beans helped greatly with the family grocery bill. Then the crab apples and others, raspberries, currants and gooseberries and some years cherries made a little variety of sauces and jams. Cottage cheese was always a favorite and so was "Johnny Cake" (cornbread) and corn or graham mush. Usually at least one barrel of winter apples were bought and from relatives in Illinois and Nebraska came dried fruit as gifts at Christmas and such holidays.

Later Isaiah bought a place N.W. of Lake Preston and moved there leaving a tenant to care for his homestead. On one occasion the tenant was ready for seed corn and came to Fremont asking what he would do to get word to Isaiah to bring it out there. When Isaiah moved he had a dog named "Tripp" that never could really make a home of the new place (near Lake Preston) but would wonder back and forth the nine and a half miles between the places.

It so happened on the morning the seed corn was needed that "Tripp" was at the old homestead. Fremont wrote a letter to his brother (Isaiah) stating that seed corn was needed that afternoon at the homestead and fastened this letter to the dog's collar. He then started the dog for the new home (L.P.) and after Tripp had gone a short distance, he shot at the dog with a shell loaded with rock-salt (or coarse salt). This happened about ten o'clock in the morning and by two o'clock in the afternoon Isaiah arrived with the seed corn.

They were all young couples in the neighborhood so as often as they could they would gather at one of the homes for a party. On one occasion, Tom Coulson, his wife and sister-in-law wanted to go but there was only the stone-boat to go with; so Mrs. Coulson and her sister sat on an inverted tub and Tom rode the horse hitched to the stone-boat. There was snow on the ground and it was cold so everyone was wrapped well. On the road the stone-boat suddenly struck an obstruction and the women were upset but Tom rode on for nearly a mile before he missed them.

During sickness or bad luck about the crops or any other way that help was needed, each neighbor turned out to help and they all worked as brother and sister without ever a thought of pay, except that in need they were assured of the same helping hands. Water for stock and household was ever a problem; so when the windmill was to be raised on Fremont's place in November, the neighbors all came to help and as they were raising the tower the big snowflakes began to fall. By the next evening the drifts were 10 and 12 feet deep and maybe you think they weren't thankful for the neighbors help as the snow stayed deep until Spring. The well was one of the best for miles around and the water is still considered about the best around although it is hard and not fit for washing. They had a nice large cistern for rainwater for household needs.

No cream separators were in use then so in summer

the milk was hauled five miles to Hetland where it was separated at the creamery. The skimmed milk was brought home for the calves and pigs. This was usually the mother's task and often when she returned it was nearly time for dinner. To hurry the dinner she often twisted hay to burn as it made a very quick fire.

Speaking of fuel there comes to mind the story of a dear lady who lived near Carthage. She was from Scandinavia and her dearest neighbors from England. The English lady came over to buy her butter from the Scandinavian and as it is a custom among the Scandinavians to serve coffee to a visitor she apologized for not having fuel so that they might have their coffee and cake. The English lady, who was very neat, volunteered to see about the fuel if the other would prepare the coffee, and so saying — went out. She returned with her nice white apron full of cow chips. As the other had never used this for fuel she thought at first that the English lady was only making fun of her, but when she discovered how well they burned, she and her family soon had a shed full for early Fall.

As time went on Fremont Nelson bought and rented more land and often he would be as far as a mile to three miles from home but his wife could always see when he started for home as they had a telescope ("spy glass") at the house and on several occasions when he would wish to go to a neighbor's before returning home from the field, he would turn part of the horses loose and she (wife) would watch through the glasses and put the horses in the barn when they came home.

She could see very plainly the main street of Hetland, five miles away and knew when he started for home from a shopping trip. Often he had no "time piece" (watch) with him in the field and at such times or when he was needed, she would hang a dark garment against the white paint on their house and he would know he was needed at home.

The summer of 1898, the World's Fair was held at Omaha, Nebraska and Mrs. Fremont Nelson's parents, Mr. and Mrs. James M. Hart, lived there so she went for a visit and vacation with them, while there she contacted typhoid fever and shortly after returning home she passed away leaving Fremont with the three children, ages 8 years, 6 years and 4 years.

It was impossible for him to carry on such extensive farming operations so he sold out (machinery and stock) and moved to a small tract of land (40 acres) which he purchased at the N.W. edge of Lake Preston (Yr. 1900). This was a portion of the land owned by his brother Isaiah. In 1900 he built a home there which still stands. (His daughter Achsa Beck lived there the remainder of her life.) The place is now owned by a grandson, Merwin Beck (Achsa's son), where he presently lives. (1979)

Fremont Nelson always took a great interest in local affairs of government. He served at one time as Justice of the Peace and also on the school board (was Pres. of the 1st Board that planned for a school in Lake Preston). His greatest interest was in horticulture, farming, homemaking and a very great love of birds. He also liked to keep records of events in the family and county. He had among his papers, his 1st Taxes receipt in Dakota Territory (on the land near Hetland) along with several other documents.





## PETER J. NOEM FAMILY

By Tena Jones, Marilyn Jones and Jewel Janssen

Peter J. Noem was born at Highland Prairie, Fillmore County, Minnesota. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Petter J. Noem emigrated to the United States from Kvan, Norway, March 15, 1857, taking the name of Noem from the farm called Noem Plasse, where he was born and raised. He was also known as Petter Johannesen Stromstad and Petter Johnson Noem. Because of the origin of its name, the few people named Noem would be relatives. The over population of Norway about 1830 to 1850 sent many immigrants to the United States with nothing but hope and a willingness to work in this great land of ours, a land of promise and opportunity.

Peter J. Noem came to the Dakota Territory in June 1879 coming with the Lars Strande, Erick Arntson and Andrew Sjolie families, walking the 300 miles west helping to drive the cattle. He homesteaded on a farm north of what is now Lake Preston, the description of the homestead is N.E. ¼ Sec. 29 Twp. 111 of Range 54 west of the Fifth principal Meridian in Dakota Territory containing 160 Acres. The homestead certificate is signed by Benjamin Harrison, President of the United States. He returned to Fillmore County for a few months then came back to his "claim" in the spring of 1880 living in this vicinity until his death November 28, 1937.

He was united in marriage to Goro Halseth June 19, 1883. She arrived from Norway in 1881 and passed away March 4, 1922. They lived in a sod house down by the "lake bank". Peter walked to Watertown, South Dakota to pay the \$4.00 for the Receivers Receipt No. 2359 as a final payment required by law for the entry of the homestead in the Revised Statute of the United States. This homestead was sold in 1891. Later they purchased the farm described as N.E. Sec. 7 Twp. 111 Range 54.

They had nine living children, namely, Peter E., Martin, Christian, Anna, Julius, Mary, Carl, Emma, and Tena. Three of the children are at present living: Carl in San Francisco, Calif., Mary Malone at Lake Preston and Tena Jones at Erwin. They had fourteen grandchildren, 46 great Grandchildren and 14 great great grandchildren. Other descendants living in this vicinity are Frances Malone, Oldham; Marian Mundhenke, De Smet; Ralph Noem, Bryant; Jewel Janssen, Dale Jones and Dene Jones, all of Lake Preston. The remaining descendants are:

I. Peter

II. Martin

III. Chris

IV. Anna Sutton [Grace Knutson] (Deanna Boone) (Duane) (Dorene Hamish) ((Darby Jo)) ((Amy)); [Percy] (Dennis) ((Matthew)) ((Andrew John)) (Steven) (Barbara).

V. Julius [Curtis] (Debra) (David); [Norwood] (Wayne) (Keith) (Neal) (Marvin) (LaVonne); [Norma Lutz] (Charlotte Garner) (Rick) (Linda Morrison) ((Stacey)) (Janelle); [Ralph] (Temara Kopang) ((Jana)) ((Jason)) (Monica Soromo) ((Leigh)) (Nancy Smith) ((Jeremy)) ((Staci)) (Bonnie Sour) ((Brandi Jo)) (Chelie) (James); [Joyce Litz] (Dyann Smith) ((David)) ((Matthew)) (Robert) ((Robert)) (Michael) (Patricia Hopson) (Elizabeth); [Mildred Hotchkiss] (Paul) (Janet) (Dennis) (David); [Myrtle Collins].

VI. Mary Malone [Francis]; [Marian Mundhenke] (David) (Jeffrey) (Brent) (Mary Alice).

VII. Carl

VIII. Emma McNamara Larsen [Genevieve Louise]; [Jewel Janssen] (Randy) (Bradley) (Scott) (Cheryl).

IX. Jacob

X. Tena Jones [Beverly]; [Dale] (Dawn) (Duane) (David); [Dene] (Steven) (Beverly) (Bryon).

[Grandchildren] (Great Grandchildren)

((Great Great Grandchildren))

Mr. and Mrs. Peter J. Noem spent their life on the farm, raising cattle, hogs, corn, wheat and oats. The hardships they endured during those years raising a family and making a living during 1880 to 1900 must have been great with the blizzard of 1888, prairie fires, giving birth to children and illnesses without a doctor. they had the added sorrow of their oldest son Peter E. Noem having to spend his entire life in a wheelchair. A neighbor gave their youngest daughter the information that twins had been the first born and died at birth.

They loved music and encouraged their children in musical instruments so the children Martin, Christ, Anna, Julius and Mary organized a band—violins, flutes, clarinets, piccolo and cornet and the organ were played. A neighbor, Henry Limbo played the drums. They made music many evenings and furnished the music for many dances.

The four sons served in the first World War and all the grandsons served in the second World War and the Korean Conflict.

From the life on the prairie in a sod house in 1880 to 1920 was a great change—driving horses and going places in a lumber wagon, runners put on the lumber wagon in the winter time with lots of quilts and horse hide blankets to keep warm, attending the churches, Garfield, Clara Lutheran, and North Preston. All the children but the youngest were confirmed in the Norwegian language. For years the Rev. Byer, a travelling minister, visited often.

Goro Halseth Noem was a daughter of Erick Arntson and a half sister to Mrs. Gor Sjolie, Andrew Arntson and Ole Arntson. Peter J. Noem, oldest son of a big family, had one brother, Ole Noem, who lived on a farm north of Lake Preston.

Mrs. Noem brought her spinning wheel with her



Martin Noem





when she came, sheep were kept, the wool was washed, carded and the spinning wheel was used to make the yarn which she knitted into hose and mittens and other goods. She did not like the prairie and missed the fjords, water, hills and trees of her homeland. Living beside the railroad track at one time, she found her home a convenient feeding stop for all the hobos, being very good hearted.

This was a Norwegian community and the customs of Norway were kept. Funerals were a time for everyone to come to help and "wakes" were kept. Friends and relatives stayed up each night until the day of the burial. Neighbor women came in to help at the birth of a baby and a fruit soup which was a delicacy was one of the gifts. Fruit soup was made by cooking dried prunes, apples, peaches and raisins with tapioca as a thickening. Dances were held often and at Christmas time they had "Yule Bok" and the spring dance. "Yule Bok" (Christmas Fools) was a gathering of a group in funny clothes and it would be planned to surprise some family and they would spend the evening dancing. The "Spring Dance" was a lively dance: a man would choose his lady partner and he would dance around her as if he was on a spring.

Living on the prairie involved a lot of hard work. They butchered their own meat, salting it to cure it, making soap, washing clothes on the board, softening hard water with lye, roasting barley and wheat and grinding it in the coffee grinder for coffee. It involved buying apples by the barrel, prunes, crackers and ginger snaps in wooden boxes. They milked cows, churned butter, raised turkeys, geese, ducks and chickens and made huge loaves of bread for their big family. The butter was taken to town and traded for groceries at the Chris Beck store (father of Ing Beck). A lot of quilts were sewn and tied. Goose down was saved for pillows.

Christmas meant lots of baking and cooking... Rosettes, kringles, romme grut, jule kage, fruit soup. Other favorites were kumla, primost yat ost (goat cheese) rullepolse, salted herring, lefse, lutefisk.

In this Centennial year we have seen quite a change. There have been wet years, dry years such as in the dirty 1930's and prairie fires. From makeshift school rooms to large school houses with swimming pools. From a walking plow to eight bottom plows. From oxen to big tractors. From prairie to shelterbelts and built-up farms with new homes and all modern conveniences. From neighbor women assisting at a birth to fully equipped clinics and hospitals. From walking as a means of transportation to horses—cars—jets.

One thing that has not changed throughout these one hundred years is the neighborliness. In times of sorrow and trouble everyone comes to help and in times of joy all will celebrate.

## ODDEN FAMILY

By Mayland Odden

One hundred years ago, June 16, 1879, Tolef Jensen Odden, his wife, Ingeberg and two daughters, Kari and Thea came to Dakota territory and built a sod house two miles north of the Lone Tree northeast of Lake Preston. A son, Anton Odden, was born near LaCrosse, Wisconsin enroute to Lake Preston.

In 1883, Tolef Odden helped organize the North Preston Lutheran Church. He was its first Deacon and caretaker of the cemetery. He donated the cemetery ground

to the church on August 12, 1883. Church before that time was held in the first depot east of the present town of Lake Preston. It was later moved to its present position because the Milwaukee train came through. Church was also held in the different homes in the North Preston area.

At the time Tolef gave the cemetery ground he never dreamed that his wife, Ingeberg, would be the first to be buried there in February 1884 and that his son, Peter, two years old would be buried there May 15, 1884 and his nine year old daughter, Thea would be buried there August 18, 1884.

After Tolef's wife died, he wrote to Norway for his second wife to-be to come to Dakota and help him with his family. She arrived in March of 1885 and they were married April 6, 1885 by Reverend Ole N. Beyer. Her maiden name was Petronella Gudmundsdatter Sveen.

On July 31, 1886, nine year old Kari died, and the first son from the second wife, Gudmund Tolefson Odden was born August 4, 1886 and died two days later. All are buried in Odden Cemetery on the Odden homestead.

It must have been heartbreaking to lose so many of your family in less than two years.

On July 9, 1888 their luck changed and they were blessed with a pair of twins, Jens Tolefson Odden and Ida Tolefsdatter Odden.

When Jens grew up he worked for his relative, E. G. Ostroot in the flour mill. He then went to Minneapolis and worked for General Mills and from there was transferred to Buffalo, New York as the head miller. He retired there and later moved to Minneapolis. He celebrated his 90th birthday July 9, 1978 and is the only living member of the Tolef Odden family.

Ida married Roy Lawson of Lake Preston and died in Sandstone, Minnesota in the 1940's.

In the fall of 1888 Gunder Lunde walked out to visit his uncle, Tolef Odden. It started out as a beautiful afternoon, but before he could get back to Lake Preston, the blizzard of 1888 overtook him. He found a straw stack and dug himself into it. He had some matches and would start a fire and stamp it out with his hands and feet to keep from freezing. He lived through it and was a prominent business man of Lake Preston in the Elevator business.

On November 16, 1890 the Odden's luck changed again and they were blessed with another pair of twins, Gudmund Tolefson Odden and Thea Tolefsdatter Odden. They were named after a brother and sister that died before them, which was customary in the early days. Thea died July 19, 1911. Gudmund worked on farms and in the flour mill until he purchased the drayline. He married Tillie Karban in 1913.

The drayline business was hard work as there were as many as eight trains a day to meet. Everything came by train. There were as many as four draylines in Lake Preston at one time.

George Coulson became a partner of Gudmund's in the dray business. They hauled their share of the brick and lumber that went into the business places and houses built in town. The old Lake Preston Creamery shipped in and out a lot of butter, cream and milk which gave the drayline lots of hauling. The creamery was located on the lake bank near the dump ground, land that is now owned by Wesley Martin.

Gudmund moved to the farm 3½ miles southwest of Lake Preston and retired in 1950. He was a member of the Lake Preston Fire Department and helped Lake Preston celebrate its 75th anniversary with his beard and black derby. He died December 25, 1970.

He was running the drayline in October 1911 when President Taft's train came into town.

Odden and Coulson sold the drayline to Harry Adams





who operated it until he was no longer able to.

They say that the Odden sod house, which was north of Lake Preston was white washed inside and was warm in winter and cool in summer. It must have been good, to be able to raise two sets of twins through the blizzard of 1888 and such rough Dakota winters.

When Petronella Gudmundsdatter Sveen was going to come to Dakota to marry Tolef Odden, her mother Eline Ericksdatter Sveen decided to come along. Her husband had just died and she did not want her daughter to go to Dakota alone. So she loaded up six of her daughters and three granddaughters and came to Lake Preston. When they all married and their children married, Gudmund Odden said he was related to everybody in Lake Preston. You can see why. Some of the names they took were: Peter Lunde, Peter Nordhagen, Ole Jordet, E. G. Ostroot, John Wirum, Will Larson, Charlie Lance, Halver Halverson, John O. Julson, Ole Omdahlen, Louis Skarsmoen, Roy Lawson, Skaret, and many more.

In 1892 Tolef Odden wrote to his father, Jens Erickson Odden in Odden, Norway, telling about his family and his farm. When his son Jens Odden visited his grandfather's home place in Odden, Norway, in 1947 they were taking down the house. Between the walls they found this letter that was written by Tolef to his father 56 years before. It was just as legible as the day it was written. It was in Norwegian so Mrs. Donald Nelson translated it. The letter is as follows:

Dear Father,

It is a long time ago that I wrote to you. Perhaps you think I have forgotten you, but I have not forgotten you. But I have so much to do that there are little time to write.

First I would like to tell you that we are all well and our health is good, and we thank God for that.

Anton Jon is 12 years old and big for his age. He is helping me and drives a team in spring's work.

Jens and Ida Eline are smart for their age. They will be 4 years old next summer.

The second pair of twins Gudmund and Thea were one year old in November. They are also well. Gudmund big for his age and Thea little.

Also this fall we were blessed with a good year. If God would only give us a few more years like this.

I have not heard anything about where you are. But I suppose you are still living at Odden. I am sorry to hear that Ingebjorg Odden passed away and left so many little ones behind. It must be difficult for Lars to get help to take care of the house when there are so many both young and old ones.

This spring I have 125 acres to work. (125 acres is 500 Norwegian maal). I have 3 horses and 2 oxen. I also have 4 cows, 2 calves and a colt 2 years old.

It hurts me many times to think about that you have to live with strangers now when you are getting old. But perhaps you like it just as well where you are as if you were with any of your own. I do not suppose you are thinking more about coming over here, it perhaps would not be so good at your age.

I will pray for you that you in every way are getting ready for a longer trip. Be ready when the Lord is calling you home to him, there it is no sickness, sorrow or pain. Yes, dear father pray to the Lord in your last days, pray from the bottom of your heart that you may have a peaceful death.

I am sending you a picture of our family. It is not so good, it is hard to get the little children to sit still. You perhaps know who the older children are. Of the smaller is Thea sitting on her mother's lap and

Gudmund on my lap. Eline Jordet is still alive, but she is not very good, she has been in bed since Christmas. Greet everyone at Odden from us. Greet also others that know us.

The warmest greetings to you from Petra and the children and Eline Nordhagen. But first and last you are greeted from your devoted son T. Odden.



**The Tolef Odden family; left to right, Tolef Odden, wife Petronella, twins Gudmund and Thea, Jens, Grandmother Eline Sveen, and Ida.**

Tolef Odden died in 1897 and left his wife, one son, Anton age 18, twins, Jens and Ida age nine, Gudmund and Thea age seven. They moved from the farm into a house in Gopher Town north of the light plant. There was no county aid or food stamps then so the mother washed clothes for 25 cents a washing and the girls delivered the washing with a wagon. The boys were put out on farms to work where they could get good food. They all grew up to be strong and healthy.

This story is much like many other Pioneer stories. We all feel sad for the hardships and heartbreaks our ancestors suffered. We are very grateful, however, that they came to this country, especially to Lake Preston, the greatest town on earth.

## **HANS I. OLSTON FAMILY**

**Submitted by Evelyn Olston**

Hans I. Olston, cashier of the Merchants Exchange Bank of Lake Preston, South Dakota, was born in Norway September 14, 1859, the youngest of four children born to Iver Suphellen and Carrie (Rodsetter) Olston. The others bore the names of Ole, Susan and Lewis. The family emigrated to America in the year of 1861, and, after stopping in Dane county, Wisconsin for a few months, located in Fillmore county, Minnesota, where the boyhood of our subject was passed, and where, also, he completed his common school course. In 1876 the family moved to Freeborn county, Minnesota, and here Hans completed his high-school studies and took a course at the Mankato State Normal school to fit him for a public school teacher and subsequently followed that vocation for five years, teaching in Minnesota and Dakota from 1880 to 1885.

After his marriage, Mr. Olston moved to Dakota with the meager capital of twelve dollars, and, in 1884,





filed a timber claim to the northeast quarter of section 7, township 111, range 54, and made that his home for two years. In 1886 he engaged in the real estate and loan business in the town of Lake Preston, and, in 1887, he formed a partnership business with J. B. Sullivan in that business, the partnership existing until 1890.

At that time a company was formed in Lake Preston which bought out the Merchants Exchange Bank, then owned by G. W. Fifield & Co. Of this bank Sullivan became cashier and Mr. Olston assistant cashier. In 1894 Sullivan sold his interest to James Solberg, who became vice-president and Mr. Olston became cashier.

He served the citizens of his adopted city in the capacity of president of the city board, or mayor, also a member of the board of education, of which board he was treasurer. Politically, he was a Republican, and also prominently connected with the secret organization of the city, being a member of the Masonic order, Meridian lodge No. 94; the I.O.O.F., No. 66, which he joined in 1887; and also a charter member of the A.O.U.W. No. 81. Mr. Olston was a member of the United Scandinavian Lutheran Church.

The marriage of Mr. Olston to Miss Lena Gutterson, daughter of Egil and Magla Gutterson, Blue Earth county, Minnesota, was celebrated in the year 1882. Mrs. Olston was born in 1862. To this congenial union were born eleven children, as follows: Ida M., Edwin C., Herbert L., Arthur J., Stella L., May E., Clara E., Ruth L., Helen M., Evelyn G., and Mildred C.

The only survivors of this family of eleven as of this spring are Clara E. Olston (Mrs. Blaine Simons) living in Sun City, Ariz.; Helen M., (Mrs. C. S. Barrett) living in South Pasadena, Calif.; and the writer, Evelyn G. Olston, living in Los Angeles, Calif.

The youngest, Mildred C. Ramsey of Whittier, Calif., died six months ago of a heart attack. My father died in August, 1937, my mother December 22, 1949.

A vivid memory is of my mother telling me that in the early days she and father would sit in the evenings and twist hay to burn in the cookstove the next day—and dream of what they would do for their children when they became more affluent.

## ELIAS G. OSTROOT FAMILY

**By Bernese Ostroot Maxam**

Elias G. Ostroot was born January 24th, 1855 at Hoyland Sandness in Norway, and came to America at the age of 19. He worked at a brickyard in Akeley, Iowa for about six months before moving to Mason City, Iowa on January 14th, 1875. There he was employed by Brickson's Brickyard for a time before becoming a grain buyer for S. S. Cargill Co.

He married Kajsa Anderson in 1877, and moved to northwood, Iowa where he continued to work as a grain buyer for five years. They then moved to Hartland, Minn. where they lived for a year while Elias continued working for S. S. Cargill Co.

In the spring of 1883 Elias moved to a "Homestead Relinquishment" he had purchased, north of Lake Preston, So. Dak., and established it as a "Tree Claim". That same year he brought his parents from Norway, and helped them settle down on the farm where they lived for a number of years.

He moved into Lake Preston proper in July of 1886, and was employed as an agent for W. W. Cargill and Co.

until March of 1898. It was at that time that Elias and his brothers purchased the Lake Preston Milling Co. (The history of the Milling Co. will be found in another part of the Anniversary Booklet.)

Elias and Kajsa had six children, two of whom died in infancy. Kajsa died on October 29, 1901, and is buried in the Lake Preston cemetery.

Elias married Anna Marie Martinson on October 23, 1903. They had two children, Bernese and Sheldon, both of whom now reside in the Minneapolis, Minn., area.

Elias moved to Minneapolis, Minn., in 1924 where he lived out his remaining years. He passed away in October of 1936 at the age of 81 years, and is buried in the Lake Preston cemetery.

He was active in the founding of the Lake Preston Lutheran Church, the constitution of which was adopted March 13, 1887. Soon thereafter Elias, A. Karlson and H. I. Olston organized the Lutheran Sunday School. The Ladies Aid was organized in 1887 at the Ostroot home. Kajsa and four other women were the charter members. The pioneers had very little means so, at the first meeting, the women decided to collect dues of five cents monthly for each member.

## The Paterson Clan --

**The Paterson family has been a part of the Lake Preston community since 1881, with a Paterson farming much of the same land yet today. This report is being made by David G. Paterson, a grandson of the homesteaders and now a grandfather himself.**

David Paterson was born October 7, 1856 in Aberlemo, Scotland, being the fifth child to William Paterson and his wife, Margaret Duncan Paterson. William was the eldest son and so succeeded his father as "grieve" or foreman of an agricultural estate named Wemyss. David had four brothers and two sisters.

As a young man he and his next younger brother, Colin, became tannery apprentices in Arbroth, Scotland. In 1878, as young men 20 and 21 years old, they decided to go to America. They went west as far as Milwaukee where they both found work in tanneries. But they were farmers and livestock men, and soon became interested in going west to Dakota Territory. Being practical and Scottish they resolved to accumulate a nest egg to make such a move possible.

By the spring of 1881 the decision was made. They were going to Dakota. They went by train to Volga, and then proceeded westward on foot arriving in June, 1881. They agreed that each was free to select whatever available land they might choose so they would not be limited to locating on adjacent lands. They followed the route of the railroad that was being built.

Grandpa related that as they passed through Lake Preston he was "impressed by the sea of waving grasses" and thought good crops would grow where the grasses grew so abundantly. They stopped at Kingsbury, a spot that developers had expected to become a thriving town since it was located almost mid-way between Preston, Lake Henry and Silver Lake (De Smet).

However, once the railroad was located one-half mile south the hopes for Kingsbury were gone. (Kingsbury was located in the SW corner of SW-28-111-55 owned by Robert Hauck in recent years. The stone foundations are now gone but the trees outlining the original building





sites still remain.) Grandpa learned that the man who had filed a claim on NW-4-110-55, located one mile south became discouraged by the severe winter of 1880-81 and wanted to go back east.

David looked over that quarter, purchased the preemptive rights and made this his home for the next 56 years. Colin was looking for shorter, finer grasses as he thought they would make better pasture as he wanted to emphasize livestock production. Actually he didn't go on much further, as he located 4 miles northwest of De Smet.

The two brothers worked together that summer and early fall of 1881 and built one room homes on their land as the original settlers had only built sod shanties. All materials had to be hauled or carried from Volga, as the train did not go beyond that point. Grandpa did not farm that first summer, but did turn sod on a few acres in preparation for planting the next spring.

In the late fall of 1881 Grandpa and Colin returned to Milwaukee where they again worked in the tanneries and saved every possible penny to buy seeds, tools, and basic supplies to take back to their new homes in Dakota Territory. David wrote to the lassie that he had left behind and reported that "the home" was built and asked her to come to be his bride. Grandma accepted and said she would come in the spring of 1882, and would join him in Dakota Territory. This young lady did make that long, long trip by herself arriving about June 1st, 1882.

**The Times of June 8, 1882 carried this announcement:**

**Married—June 4, 1882, by Rev. S. Norton, at the home of Mr. F. P. Remington; David Paterson of Preston to Miss Jane A. Allardice of Broughty Ferry, Forfarshire, Scotland.**

Mr. Remington lived on the quarter just west of Grandpa's (where Dale Kerr and family now live). Rev. Norton was minister of the newly formed Lake Henry Church which met in the homes of the members. A later report stated that this was the first marriage in the Lake Henry community. These frugal, hard working people enjoyed good health and good fortune and lived on "the homestead" for many years, with David passing on May 12, 1937 and Grandma on October 28, 1940.

Seven children were born of this marriage. They actively participated in the activities of this community for all or most of their lives. They are listed here with names of spouses and children.

Colin Campbell Paterson, Born April 30, 1883, Died Dec. 5, 1947, a bachelor.

Beatrice Paterson Kerr, Born Oct. 27, 1884, Died Dec. 29; Husband, Delbert G. Kerr; Dale Kerr.

Francis Grace Paterson Langlie, Born July 27, 1886, Died July 15, 1956; Husband, Melvin Langlie; Mercedes and Warren.

Margaret May Paterson Johnson, Born Jan. 5, 1889, Died Feb. 9, 1964; Husband, Marvin B. Johnson; Lloyd and Ruth.

William Richard Paterson, Born July 29, 1890, Died March 1, 1967; Wife, Gertrude Smith; Daughters — Mavis, Racheal and Marjorie.

David A. Paterson, Born June 27, 1892, Died May 18, 1967; Wife, Madeline T. Atkinson; David George, Lucille C. (Mrs. Kenneth Anderson), Laurel Jean (Mrs. John Wilson), and William Colin Paterson.

\* Florence Etta Paterson Ferguson, Born Jan. 9,

1896; Husband, William E. Ferguson; Donald Schrader and Dorothy Schrader Olson.

While having only a minimum of formal schooling, this Scottish couple had a great respect for education. They were industrious, hard working, frugal people interested in the religious, social and civil (or economic) development of not only their family but of the community. Colin, the eldest son, early assumed the responsibility for the farm work and did not complete grade school. All of the other children graduated from high school, and four of them graduated from college.

Grandpa Paterson served for many years as Superintendent of Sunday School, and as Deacon, of the Lake Henry Church and later served for many years as Deacon of the Lake Preston Congregational Church. A good friend (and one of the very first settlers in the community) was Jacob Johnson, who homesteaded and lived one mile west of Lake Preston where his grandson Lloyd Johnson now lives. Jacob served as State Senator during the 1907 and 1909 legislative sessions. He was followed by W. F. Brennan, another successful farmer who built a fine set of farm buildings south of Lake Preston. I recall my grandfather telling that Billie Brennan was "much too liberal" by his standards so he "felt it his duty" to agree to campaign for the office. He was elected in 1914 and 1916, serving in the State Senate during the 1915-1917 sessions. He was followed for the next four terms by Charles A. Alseth (then a young attorney). In November, 1916 he was elected County Commissioner and so served for four years.

Very soon after their marriage, and while "proving up" his homestead claim, David laid claim to the SE-1-110-56 by planting ten acres of trees. . . by tree claim. This quarter was 2½ miles away, so grandpa jumped at the first opportunity to expand his land holding closer to home. The adjoining SW-4-110-55 had been homesteaded by Miss Minnie Osgood, the eldest daughter of a family that also homesteaded another quarter nearby. Soon after "proving up" her ownership, she decided to return to Iowa and agreed to sell to Grandpa. The records show that title was transferred on Oct. 7, 1892 for a consideration of \$1,600.00. The records also show that at this same time the tree claim was sold to Iver Amundson for \$1,140 and the sum of \$356 was borrowed at 8% from Mathias Mauch. Incidentally, that was the one and only mortgage that has ever been recorded on the NW¼-4-110-55. This absence of mortgage debt must be uncommon when one considers all the problems that farming in this area has had to cope with in the past ninety-eight years. To this day, the Paterson clan refer to this land as "Minnie's quarter."

Grandpa was interested in expanding the size of his farm as his family grew and as land became available. The adjoining quarter to the east was purchased in 1906 for \$6,000.00. This became the home of my parents, David A. and Madeline T. Atkinson in the spring of 1919. They operated this farm until 1953 when they moved to Lake Preston. William Colin Paterson with his wife, Eileen (Rasmussen) and five sons have continued to reside there and carry on their farm and livestock operations. Another adjoining quarter, SE¼-5-110-55 was purchased for \$10,400 from W. B. D. Gray in 1916, and that land became known as "the Gray quarter."

Grandpa and Grandma Paterson celebrated their Silver Anniversary in 1907 by visiting the scenes of their childhood in Scotland, taking Florence (then a young girl





of 12) with them. This meant taking a train to New York City, and then a passenger ship to Liverpool.

Then 25 years later, both the Times and De Smet News carried reports of their Golden Wedding open house celebrated at the farm home with all children present. A highlight of that event was a mock wedding performed by the 14 grandchildren. I remember playing the part of Rev. Norton; Lloyd Johnson was Mr. Remington in whose home they were married; Mercedes Langlie was the bride and Donald Schrader was the groom (both arriving on the scene in a buggy with Lloyd driving the team). The Times article reported "Mr. and Mrs. Paterson have enjoyed a remarkable degree of health and strength as well as courage, and are still strong in mind and body after having endured many hardships and enjoyed many pleasures. To such pioneers as these, we owe a debt of gratitude for securing for us the advantages we now enjoy." This event took place July 3, 1932 or more than 45 years ago, and just before the terrible drought of the 1930's.

#### **Colin C. Paterson**

Much of the success of the farm operations must be accorded to Colin, the eldest son, who had time to complete only six years of school, but early became the backbone of the farming and livestock operations. While all the children shared in the workload, the brunt was carried by Colin. Grandpa preferred Shorthorn cattle because of their dual purpose, providing milk and beef. Colin favored the Herefords, and with my father, David A., became widely known for quality breeding stock. As early as 1919 Colin paid \$7,000 for a bull that was to become the foundation of the herd.

Colin refused to sell off the herd during the terrible droughts of 1934 and 1936. Hayland was rented as far away as Bradley in the early 30's (a crew of six men and twelve horses spent several weeks cutting and stacking hay), and hundreds of acres of hay (if that tall coarse grass can be called hay) were cut and stacked in the Preston lake bed in 1934, 1935 and 1936. And this was done with horsepower (and manpower). In the fall of 1934, the foundation herd was shipped to Mankato, Minn., where the cattle were to be wintered on a large farm located in the River bed just north of the city and fed on straw, corn stalks, and sugar beets. What a terrible jolt Uncle Colin and my Dad had when they went to get the cattle in the spring. No care whatsoever had been given the cattle which had been turned loose in the river bottom. Many of the calves had died and the cows were skin and bone.

Immediately, they went about and located straw and some hay and cottonseed cake to feed the cattle for several weeks before they were strong enough to stand shipment back home. Uncle Colin was almost sick from this, and blamed himself for leaving those precious foundation animals in the care of someone else. The few that were kept at home and fed on stacked Russian thistles were in far better condition.

Many of you will recall the "dirty Thirties". Unemployment was the national problem at the time, but on the farm the real problem was the drought (and then the grasshoppers). Between these two we could not even raise roughage for the cattle or horses. The only thing that seemed to grow was the Russian thistles, and when the cattle were grazing on them you didn't dare stand less than 30 feet away or you were likely to "get smeared".

Colin loved his Herefords. Each animal had its own name, and he could identify and tell you a story about each one. For years, Colin never drove a car, but when pickup trucks became popular he purchased one and then owned several of these as they were not only a means of transportation but useful as a small truck to haul his bulls. He would sell yearling bulls to farmers all over Kingsbury County, and would always guarantee that if they took care of them they would find they had made a good investment. Not only would they have better calves than before, but he would buy the bull back in a couple of years for more than they paid originally. This he would do. Then these mature 3-4-5 year old bulls were resold to ranchers where once again they improved the quality. Colin had many contacts as far west as Pierre interested in his cattle.

#### **William R. Paterson**

Uncle Will (this is what we always called him, although I think to others he was commonly known as Bill) graduated from Lake Preston High School in 1908. There he had been a star basketball player on a team that normally played teams from larger cities and located on one of the two railroads serving Lake Preston. He went to Yankton College, graduating in 1913. Track was his favorite sport in college. He held records for many years as a hurdler and high jumped over 6 feet. (Today almost every high school has a 6 ft. or better jumper. His record stood over 20 years.) He suffered a compound fracture of a leg in a high hurdle race, and he was to suffer greatly in later years from this knee injury.

He was a page in the State Senate while Grandpa was a Senator. He married Gertrude Smith, with the ceremony taking place in the Lake Henry church. They purchased land southwest of De Smet and carried on farming and livestock operations there. The drought hit that area early, and after a series of crop failures they moved to De Smet and he became a livestock trucker. In about 1934 the family moved to Brookings. The three girls, Mavis, Racheal, and Marjorie, all graduated from Brookings high school and attended State College.

During WWII, and after Grandma's passing, they returned to the homestead and farmed with Uncle Colin, and began buying land in Matthews and Esmond townships. Within a short time they had put together a substantial acreage and moved there to operate that land and oversee their pastures. After Uncle Colin's death they moved to the home that he had recently purchased in Lake Preston and went into semi-retirement. Uncle Will became a director of the Community State Bank, and with Aunt Gertrude took an active interest in Lake Preston community affairs.

#### **Delbert G. and Beatrice Kerr**

Uncle Delbert was an "outsider from Iowa." I say an outsider because he was not truly accepted as a part of the Paterson clan, and he was proud of his independence. For the most part, he conducted his own farming and livestock enterprises, joining the Paterson clan only on the "threshing run." He suffered from rheumatism or rheumatoid Arthritis and often used a cane to get about. Uncle Delbert was a good visitor and loved to tell stories. His favorite subjects were sulky racing (Dan Patch); baseball; and the legendary wrestler from Iowa who I believe was named Gotch. Arthur Witrock was their hired man for many years and a very good worker. One year Art bought a raffle ticket from my sister and won the new car given away by the Legion on Watermelon





Day. He kept the car. Many asked him why he didn't sell the car and take the money. He said, "If I take the money it will soon be gone, but keeping it I will have a new car."

Auntie Bea was very hard working, and did much more than one should almost ever do to help her mother and to keep Grandma's household together (and as so often happens almost without ever receiving a word of thanks). Grandma might rave about some small gift she had received from Francis but never mention the hours of help Beatrice had given her with the baking, cleaning, and washing. Auntie Bea was an excellent cook and hosted many of the family dinners. They adopted Dale rather late in life, and were so happy to have a son. I often think how proud they would be to know of the accomplishments of Dale and his family.

#### **Melvin and Francis Langlie**

Melvin worked in a Lake Preston bank. Mercedes and Warren were born while they lived in Lake Preston, but before Warren started school they moved to California settling in Monrovia. There Uncle Melvin founded a "Building & Loan Association" that grew and grew. He was the Secretary and over the years accumulated ownership of a great majority of the shares in the business which he sold in about 1960.

#### **David A. and Madeline Atkinson Paterson**

My father graduated from LPHS in 1913. He was a member of the championship basketball team and one of the owners of the "Merry Widow," a large inboard launch that was the pride of Lake Henry at that time. My mother graduated from high school at Truman, Minnesota where Grandpa John Atkinson was the depot agent. (Just a few years ago we visited Truman and saw the depot that was built when he came there as agent, and the house that had been their home.)

Grandpa's brothers had settled between Oldham and Lake Preston and Grandpa John decided that the prospects were brighter as a farmer than as an agent, especially since his son, George, so wanted to become a farmer. They moved early in the spring of 1914. Mother was hired as the teacher of the "Paterson school" (located immediately south of Lloyd Williams' farm) for the 1914-15 school year and thus met Dad. The next year she stayed at home and taught at the "Brennan School."

During that year she rode "Old Joe" to the various neighborhood homes to interest girls in a basketball team. Eva Menzel and her sister, two Casper girls, Mable Holland, two Nelson girls, and others formed this team and challenged the Oldham High School team to a game. And they won both games before "huge crowds"—as mother tells the story.

From these events, an ice cream social, and from a box social, they raised money to buy playground equipment. Grandpa John put that equipment up so well it still stands straight and true and can be seen if you will drive by the "Brennan school yard." Another of her favorite stories is telling how the next year, she drove a horse and buggy 2½ miles each day to the Streeter school. She would stable her horse at the Harry Streeter farm about a quarter mile away from the school, walk to the school house, and then start the fire. Many of the winter mornings the temperature would be well below zero. It was so cold in the school house that she brought bricks to heat on the stove, and then she would give each child a brick to put their feet on. She also had a big kettle and during the cold winter days would make soup so the students would have something warm at noon. She still

marvels to this day that a "city bred girl" like her could do these things.

Mother has another story that is always good for a laugh to show what a "greenhorn" she was at farming. Grandpa John was meticulous in all that he did, and she heard him complaining one day that it was difficult to plant straight rows with the dust blowing. Driving by where her Uncle Ezra was planting, she noticed that he had a wire stretched across the field and asked, "What is that wire for?" He replied, "to guide me so my rows are straight." That evening she just couldn't wait to tell her Dad that she got the key for straight corn rows from Uncle Ez—stretch a wire across the field. (For some, perhaps, we should explain that the wire was the "check wire" that was attached to the corn planter to "check the corn." Now all that is a thing of the past as the tractor planters are "power checked.")

While not the largest, nor the strongest man in the area, there were few, if any, who could do more work than my Dad. He would haul the biggest load of bundles, load the wagon the fastest, dig post holes the straightest, make the best shocks, or fork more manure—it really didn't matter what the task, it was a matter of pride with him to do it well and quickly. He liked to play cards (and he preferred to win).

For many years, his sports challenge was at the pool table, and he was one of the better players. Mr. Lawler operated the pool hall for many years, and there was always a number of onlookers when Dad and "Hub" Jones would pair off. Dad was one of the early supporters of the "Senior Center" and enjoyed having that as a meeting place for whist and rattle games. Dad liked kids, and was good at telling "once upon a time" and "make believe" stories to the cousins and the grandchildren. He could make the wild stories of when he was "Crowfoot the Indian" seem very real and frightening as well.

Croquet was a favorite game at our house. For several years in the late 20's, we had a few light bulbs strung around the yard, so the croquet game could go on long after dark. Mother was an equal match for Dad, which he would really never admit to, but he would say that "luck was always on her side."

Dave and Madeline attended many events at the Lake Preston schools, from basketball games and band concerts to class plays and oratorical contests. They have had at least one child or grandchild attending Lake Preston schools since 1926. For many years, Mother was a Sunday School Teacher and an active member of the Band Boosters. In later years she has become very interested in bridge and plays an excellent, competitive game yet today.

Dad was a livestock farmer. He wasn't the dedicated Hereford breeder that Colin was, but he did like good cattle, and to raise and feed cattle. He liked to buy and sell, and was a good judge of weights. It was a big day when the fat cattle would be ready to ship. A car would be ordered from Mr. Garlock, the Milwaukee RR agent. We would then drive the cattle to the stockyards, being very careful not to have them run to keep down the shrink.

Word would get around that cattle were being shipped and other feeders would stop by to look the cattle over and place their guess as to how they were going to sell. It seemed liked "the run was always heavy" and the "market was off 25c to 50c" whenever your own cattle got to market.





My father also liked horses, and prided himself in having good teams with good harness. He entered teams in horse pulling contests when that activity was revived in the late '30's and early 40's and often won. He was a good driver and would get the best out of his team. He would never use a whip or abuse the horse. In the 1940's Henry Poppen was the Lake Preston dealer for the Ford Tractor. My Dad thought that "somewhat of a toy" and decided to rely upon real horse power. In the discussion about what the tractor could do, somehow it ended up in a wager. Dad bet he could hook his team to the tractor and pull it all over. The bet was on, so soon Dad took a team to town and the contest was held out in front of the blacksmith shop with the horses easily pulling the tractor backwards with its wheels spinning on the road. But Hank Poppen declared that not a fair test, but it was with a full load that the true power of the tractor would show. So it was decided that they would take the tractor with the mounted plow out to our alfalfa field near the cemetery and they would put the plow in until the tractor could no longer pull the load. Dad was then to hitch the team to the unit and pull it. Since I am telling the story, you can be sure that the team did easily pull it. A good team that could pull together could pull a fantastic load for a short distance.

#### **William E. and Florence Ferguson**

Florence was the youngest of the homesteaders' children and graduated from Lake Preston High with the class of 1914. She had many friends in the Lake Henry neighborhood including Carrie and Grace Pirlet and Hazel Gilbert. She took an active part in forensics and debate in high school. Soon after graduation she was married to Gus Schrader. Two children were born of this marriage, Donald and Dorothy, but it soon ended in divorce. For one year she and the two children lived at the old homestead. She met William E. Ferguson, who worked in the power plant at Armour's plant in Huron. He was an outstanding softball pitcher and soon became a favorite of all of the Paterson cousins.

They were married in about 1930 and have made Huron their home to this day. Bill left Armour and became maintenance superintendent at Huron College until his retirement.

#### **Marvin B. and Margaret Johnson**

Marvin was a son of Jacob Johnson and resided for years on his father's homestead one mile west of Lake Preston. Lloyd (their son) and Esther Johnson now own and live on the homestead. Ruth married Charles (Bud) Bruce. He had a bulk Standard Oil distributorship for many years, but has sold that and is semi-retired, but still owns and operates a trailer park in Wasta, S. Dak.

## **PEDERSON FAMILY**

#### **By Christena Beck**

Christian Pederson and Ingeborg Madsen, along with a family, left Denmark March 1, 1879. They spent over three weeks on the ocean. They had to furnish their own food for the trip. The ship furnished the water but ran out and they had to drink ocean water before reaching New York.

They came by train to Kasson, Minn. The family they accompanied went further west. Christian secured work in a small woodworking factory that made furniture, wagon wheels, window screens, screen doors and caskets, all hand work.

Ingeborg did housework for seventy-five cents a week.

Christian and Ingeborg were married August 26, 1879, at Kasson. Two children were born while they lived at Kasson, Ana Johanne May 3, 1880, and Peder April 4, 1882.

In the summer of 1883 Christian came to South Dakota to file a claim in Hartland township, the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 18, Township 112, Range 54. In order to file the claim he had to walk to Watertown, 49 miles.

Christian, Ingeborg and the two children came back to South Dakota in the fall of 1883 by train.

They had the lumber for the house, their household goods, groceries, 3 cows and 24 chickens shipped to Lake Preston. Christian had these things hauled out to the homestead. They lived with Mr. and Mrs. Jens Gaarsted when they first came to South Dakota, the Gaarsteds living south of the Bethania cemetery.

Christian built the house in the fall of 1883. It was a three-room house, a living room 12x14, a bedroom 10x12, and a small room used for the kitchen in the summer and fuel storage in the winter.

The house was lumber on the inside and sod up to the eaves on the outside, the roof was shingles with no chimneys—the stovepipe went up through the roof.

The first winter was hard. The food they brought consisted of a keg of salt pork, 50 cents worth of brown sugar, 25 cents worth of raisins, 25 cents worth of prunes, coffee, salt, 3 gallons of kerosene, and flour. They brought tallow for candles but didn't have anything to form the candles with. For wicks all they had was the string out of twine sacks. They tried dipping the string in the melted tallow but that didn't work.

They had a difficult time keeping warm. For fuel the first winter they used twisted hay. Anton Pederson (Christian's brother) had cut and stacked the hay at his home. Christian used Anton's oxen to haul the hay home. He had to have enough for his cows and to heat the house.

They had the cooking range and a heater in the living room. Many days it wasn't warm enough to thaw the frost off the walls. When they set their bread sponge in the evening they had to take it to bed with them to keep it from freezing.

If the next day was windy they couldn't get the oven hot enough to bake the bread. Sometimes three days would pass before they could bake the bread.

The next summer they started using cow chips for fuel. They went out and turned them over with a fork to dry them, where the cows had been picketed. After they were dried they were brought to the house and stored. When the children became old enough that was their job.

The first summer Ingeborg had a hard time keeping track of Peder, who was two years old. He would run away and the grass was so tall he couldn't be seen. On one occasion, if it had not been for his red cap he may not have been found for he was a half mile from the house. If Peder had to be left in the house, Ingeborg had to tie him.

Karsten was born December 10, 1886, and Martin on January 30, 1890. The house was getting crowded so Christian built two more rooms, a living room, bedroom, and two rooms upstairs. Mettie was born in the new part January 7, 1894.

They lived one and one-half miles from the school that Christian helped build. It was about 24x30 feet in size, and some 30 to 35 children attended.







**The Pederson family. Back row, left to right, Mrs. Alfred [Mettie] Beck, Carsten Pederson, Hannah Borup, Martin Pederson; seated, Peder and Ingeborg Pederson.**

Some children were seven to eight years of age before they could speak English. Christian helped build two other school houses. Christian and Knut Knudson built the Bethania church. (The church was later moved to Badger—this is the Badger Lutheran church now.) They also built the pulpit and altar. He also built the depot and elevator in Willow Lake. He would walk home on Saturday and carried part of his tools home to sharpen. He then walked back Sunday afternoon, 20 miles.

When there was a death in the neighborhood, Christian was called upon to make the casket. In the winter they were covered with black cloth, in the summertime they were painted.

In the early years Christian walked to Lake Preston about twice a year to get mail and groceries. He took the extra butter to sell and carried the groceries back, using a shoulder yoke.

Christian also walked to Watertown to receive his citizenship papers.

Christian died July 30, 1899. He had been severely injured by a horse kick. He was buried July 31, 1899, in the Bethania cemetery. Shortly after the family returned from the funeral, a severe hailstorm destroyed all the crop.

Ingeborg continued to live on the farm after her husband's death and raised the family. She passed away February 24, 1934. Mettie (Ingeborg's daughter) and Alfred Beck were married Sept. 14, 1918. They had one daughter, Christena. Mettie's mother made her home with them for 15 years—those 15 years her daughter cared for her as she was paralyzed from a stroke.

Alfred passed away June 15, 1966; Mettie passed away Nov. 30, 1975.

Mettie was born on the homestead and lived her

entire life here. Her funeral was held from the church her father helped build. Mettie was a lover of plants, spent many hours with her African violets.

Christena (Mettie's daughter) was born August 18, 1919, on the homestead and has spent her entire life on it.

## **SETBACKEN FAMILY**

**By Edith Stone**

As the youngest and only survivor of the original Hans and Isabelle Setbacken Family, a few of their grandchildren prevailed upon me to write the history of their Pioneer days as it was told to me by my parents as well as experienced by me as I grew older.

My Father was nine years old when he came with parents and his brother and his sisters to the United States from Oslo, Norway to what he called "This Blessed Country." They had very little money, but relatives living in Iowa, who had persuaded them to come to this country helped them to establish themselves in Whalen, Minnesota. They obtained one hundred acres of school land for \$5.00 per acre. It was not choice land, but with perseverance, hard work and economical living, they managed to survive. They paid the relatives in Iowa, who had so generously helped them when they arrived.

At the age of 22 years, Hans Setbacken met, loved and married a pretty little Norwegian girl who was a housekeeper as well as a nurse maid for a large family, for which she received \$1.00 per week. Hans hauled rock to the Hill Dam for which he received \$1.50 per day as one cord was all he could manage to haul in one day. He hauled for the same family that Isabelle worked for so they got their room and board. The first year they cleared \$100.00. That is what gave them the idea that





they would go to So. Dakota and file on a Homestead. They acquired a team of horses and contrived to build a covered wagon. They traveled across the country to the area near Lake Preston, South Dakota. They filed on the homestead in May, 1880.

On their arrival, they were fortunate to meet the Strande family, who had preceded them. They were strangers when they arrived but they became very good friends. They helped my parents to build a sod house as well as shelter for the team of horses and a milk cow, this was a must for them all. They exchanged work and spent many happy times together, which my mother called "Just plain fun."

The snow and cold winters of 1880 and 1881 were discouraging. Food and necessary supplies so very hard to get. Many of the Homesteaders were so anxious to get back to "God's Country" as they called it, that they were thankful to sell their land for transportation to their previous homes.

The virgin land continued to produce good crops so Hans and Isabelle continued buying the cheap land. They especially wanted the Tree Claims. They both missed the beautiful trees in Southern Minnesota and were eager to start shade and fruit trees in South Dakota. I venture to say that my Father personally planted more trees than any other one person in existence. No matter where we lived, in town or on our farm, we always had a large grove of shade and fruit trees.

The sod house was replaced by a rather large house that had the appearance of a Colonial, painted white, with green shutters. The bright red barn was across the road. I wish I could have seen it at that particular time, I was too young to make the comparison of the two homes.

Seven children were born to my parents. I was three and one half years old when the family moved to town. The first thing that I remembered as a small child was the beautiful team of black horses with their bridles reined high that were hitched to a buggy that took my father to town every day. He had established a Real Estate Business in Lake Preston, so my mother and the seven children regretfully moved to town. My father had purchased several acres along the lake bank where a house had been built for the family.

At this time, help was needed to work the farms that were already purchased. My father arranged to import what we called newcomers from Norway, who were eager to move to this country. Rooms were added to our home to house them. A large cook house was also built to provide the meals. My parents insisted that the newcomers learn to speak the English language. My father maintained that if they accepted the blessings of this country, the least they could do would be to learn the language. He taught them and helped them and they were grateful to my father for teaching them. The married newcomers sent for their families and found work and homes with my father's help.

The children born to Hans and Isabelle were all encouraged to get the education that they wanted. Our three boys went to Mankato Commercial College, the two oldest girls went to Milwaukee, lived with an Aunt that we loved dearly and learned the rudiments of housekeeping and sewing. My sister Anne and I, the two youngest got our advanced learning in Minneapolis, Mn.

The great tragedy in our family was the death of our oldest brother. He was twenty-seven years old and was well established in a Bank at Andover, South Dakota.



Wedding picture, Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Setbacken

We were a well disciplined family. I can truthfully say that I never heard my mother and father speak unkindly to one another and quarreling was not allowed between the children in the house. I am sure we all had our moments of anger but it had to be controlled.

As the lone member of this great and wonderful family I shall repeat what my mother said shortly before she passed away — I quote — "I would go through it all again, if it could be, the hardships, the sad times and the joys, if we could all be together again."

Thank you for listening.

## SORENSEN FAMILY

By Anne Sorenson

Dunbar and Sorenson was the first hardware store in Lake Preston. This store was located where the Variety store is now. At one time the Masonic lodge held their meetings upstairs in this building.

J. A. Sorenson bought out Dunbar and operated the store with his sons Oage and Arnold. They had a tin shop in the store and made all the stove and furnace pipes, also all air ducts. This was a trade J. A. Sorenson had learned in Denmark. They also added plumbing and heating, sold furniture and farm machinery.

Oage and Arnold helped lay the first sewer pipes in Lake Preston. That was "the year of the lizards," the ditches were full of them.

Arnold bought the store from his father in 1927.

Mr. Delbert Kerr and L. L. Rich were on the Baker township school board when all the new schools were built. Arnold installed all the furnaces in these schools.

The store was sold to B. A. Johnson of Minnesota in 1939.

(Addenda—from history project by Sr. Civic Club, in early 1970's)







The Sorenson hardware store, Oage and Arnold Sorenson.

Dunbar and Sorenson was one of the first of the hardware stores and tinshops in town. J. A. Sorenson bought out Dunbar and added furniture and implements. He was located in the building where the variety store is now for over 50 years. He added furniture and implements and later plumbing and heating.

In the early years the Masons held their meetings upstairs. In 1928 Arnold Sorenson came back from Sioux Falls and went into business with his father. After a few years he bought his father's interest and moved across the street and later sold to a Mr. Johnson from Minnesota.

Minnesota for five years before coming to South Dakota. Three children were born to them in Minnesota, one, Bertha Marie, dying in infancy.

Emil L. and Bertha Matilda (Betsy) accompanied their parents by covered wagon to their homestead near Lake Preston, where three more children were born to Lars and Emma, Petra Amanda, Ida, and Anton L. All of their children resided in the North Preston area until their deaths.

## STRANDE FAMILY

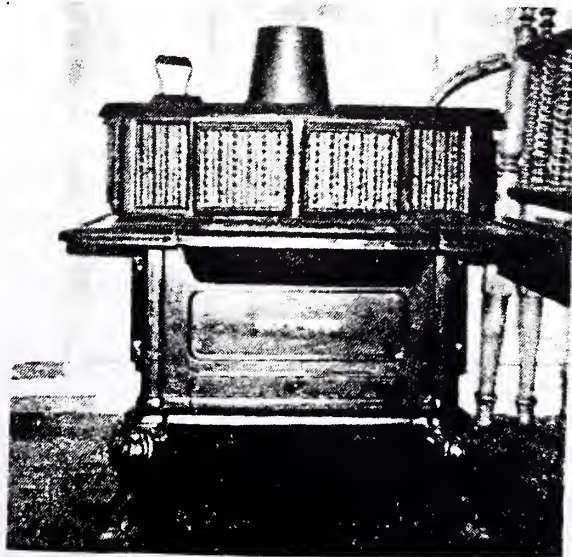
By Ardys and Michael Thompson

On June 9, 1879, Lars and Emma Strande homesteaded north of Lake Preston. They arrived here from Whalen, Minnesota where Lars was engaged in mason work.

Lars was born October 8, 1849 in GransPrestegjild at Hadeland, Norway. He emigrated to America in 1872 and spent the first years in Minnesota.

Emma Sophie Pederson was born January 13, 1848 at Vermaland, Sweden. She was the youngest of 14 children. At age 21 she left Sweden to work around Hadeland, Norway where she became engaged to Lars. In 1873 she emigrated to America and was located at Lanesboro, Minnesota.

In 1874 Lars and Emma were united in marriage at Preston, Minnesota. They made their home in Whalen,



Brought here by the Strande family, exactly 100 years ago





Lars died on May 29, 1911, at the age of 61 years. Emma died September 10, 1928 at the age of 80.

Betsy became Mrs. Thomas K. Thompson. Ida became Mrs. George Danielson. Emil and Amanda remained unmarried. Tony married Hilda Olson.

Emil lived on the homestead until he died in 1962. Emil used to tell about the trips to Watertown they had to make in the early days to obtain supplies. It was a two day trip by oxen, first traveling west to De Smet, then to Lake Poinsett and on to Watertown. On one occasion they lost the oxen, taking a whole day to find them. The oxen were turned loose at night to forage for themselves.

Galen (Bud) Strande, son of Anton and Hilda, now lives on the old homestead.

## STUBKJAER FAMILY

### ONE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

By Muriel Stubkjaer and Agnes Erickson

In 1888, three Stubkjaer brothers emigrated from Denmark to the United States. Their father's name was Anders Stubkjaer; that would make their names, Christian Anderson, Joe Anderson and Nels Anderson. They decided they would rather have the name of their father's place in Denmark, which was "Stubkjaer." They knew there were already many, many Andersons in the United States.

Nels Stubkjaer enrolled in 1889 at Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis and graduated as a Lutheran pastor in 1893. That year he was married to Lottie Berg. In 1894, they came to Lake Preston where he was pastor of Lake Preston and North Preston congregations until 1904. In that year he and his family moved to Philadelphia. After a short stay there, they moved back to Bryant, South Dakota. One of our very happy memories were the trips to Bryant on the Milwaukee train to visit our cousins, and through the years one of the very memorable occasions was when Uncle Nels came to visit us. His delightful sense of humor, and an unusual ability in story telling made his stay a most happy experience.

Our father, Christian Stubkjaer came to Lake Preston in the late 1800's. He bought a blacksmith shop and house on the very lot where the present family home now stands.

His brother, Joe Stubkjaer came to Lake Preston and they worked together for a while. Uncle Joe was an inventor and he moved West where there were more opportunities.

Our mother had been working in Minneapolis since she arrived from Denmark. Dad had known her since she was a little girl in Denmark. She came to Lake Preston and Uncle Nels married Meta and Christian on July 29, 1895.

My sister Agnes, who is 76, and I am 83, have talked about what we should write. We have had many good laughs remembering incidents that happened in our early years. We recall when there was water in Lake Preston, when the first automobiles came to our town, when there were four trains a day, two on the Milwaukee Road and two on the Northwestern Railroad.

It was a big event when Dad hired a team of horses and a surrey (with a fringe on top) to take the family out to North Preston for Sunday church services. We always wondered why the men and boys sat on the right side of the church and the women and girls on the left side. I still

wonder why!

One of our earliest recollections was when Dad worked on the steam-powered threshing machines, to get them repaired as quickly as possible. There was pressure in those days also! I wonder what those farmers would think to see the whole operation of harvesting done by a farmer sitting on a combine in 1979.

Another operation that was very interesting to watch was when Dad fitted iron tires on wagon wheels, and when plow lays had to be hardened and sharpened. These memories make us think of

### "The Village Blacksmith"

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,  
With a measured beat and slow,  
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,  
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school  
Look in at the open door;  
They love to see the flaming forge,  
And hear the bellows roar,  
And catch the burning sparks that fly  
Like chaff from a threshing floor.

Several years later when I taught first grade in Lake Preston Public School, I saw many children stand in the doorway of the blacksmith shop and watch Dad work. And not only children, young men also. Our good friend Jimmy Ostroot had a bout with T. B. and had to come home from St. Olaf College to recuperate. Jimmy used to spend many hours in the shop watching the blacksmith work. It was very interesting to see how Dad tapped the red hot horse shoes lightly in one place and harder in another place. Then he plunged the shoe into cold water and fitted it on the horse's foot to be **sure** it would be comfortable when the horse would run, walk, or trot.

My sister Agnes remembers when Dad was called to the Archer home because young Gerald was in real trouble. He had forced his head through the bars of an iron bedstead, and when he tried to pull it back he was "stuck". Dad was asked to bring his tools; he bent the rods and Gerald was soon smiling again.

Henry Lloyd was a banker in our town. He had a beautiful farm east of Lake Preston and had handsome horses that he drove with great pride. We loved to see them go by on our street. Then he got one of the first automobiles in Lake Preston. One day we heard a commotion—Mr. Lloyd was coming by our house in his car, calling "Whoa!" "Whoa!"—but he recollected in time what to do so no harm came to him—or his Buick!

During the years when there was water in the lake, we could cool off in the hot summers, and there was skating in the winter. We loved to watch our father—he was a fine skater.

Our dear friends, the Nels Kopperuds lived across the lake and we had many happy times in their home. We had many wonderful meals in their home and never questioned the fact that the grownups ate their meal first and the children ate at the second setting.

If it was winter time and the lake was frozen over, Nels Kopperud would take us for a ride on the ice in a big wagon box with runners—and very likely our father had shod the horses with shoes that had caulks on them so the horses would not slip on the ice. It really was an exciting adventure.





I shall always remember how thrilled I was to come home from teaching one summer to find a swimming pool (artesian water) in the park in a little prairie town in South Dakota where it really get hot! When I think of the pool and the park, I think of Otto Thorsness (Didn't he perfect the vacuum cleaner that made it possible to keep the pool in excellent condition for healthful swimming?) And also, how he superintended the digging up of full-grown trees with a large ball of earth around their roots, and then transplanting them in the park without losing a single tree.

We have always been grateful for the fine schools the citizens of Lake Preston have provided for their children and young people through the years.

And, as we reflect on our childhood days in this little prairie town in South Dakota, we thank God again for our parents, who put church, home and school first and made our days happy and joyous.

And now a second generation of Stubbjaers have lived, grown up, and gone out to find their place in the world. This old house, more than 75 years old, now has a Grandma, Esther Stubbjaer living there, whose chief joy is to welcome the third generation of Stubbjaers when they come home for family gatherings and holidays.

**GOD BLESS THEM ALL!**

Muriel M. Stubbjaer — Class of 1915  
Agnes Erickson — Class of 1921

## THORSNESS FAMILY

**By Greta Kopperud**

Otto D. Thorsness, son of Charles J. Thorsness and wife, Helena, moved to South Dakota in 1885 from Madison, Wisconsin. Charles Thorsness was given a homestead claim for 160 acres from the General Land

Office of the United States and was signed by President Grover Cleveland.

He took tests in Kingsbury County for a teaching certificate and taught school from 1887 to 1889 in the Lake Whitewood Area. In 1894 they moved to De Smet where he held the position of Register of Deeds.

Shortly afterwards he passed away from an illness that developed while serving in the Civil War. His Widow, Helena, son Otto and two daughters Hilda and Edna remained in De Smet where Otto attended high school. In 1902 he and Blanche Williams, a teacher in the De Smet area, moving there from Hartford, Indiana, were married. They moved to Lake Preston where he operated a hardware store from 1902 to 1908. Later he owned his own garage where his services were in demand throughout eastern South Dakota. His interest in engines extended to boats when he operated his passenger boat at Lake Henry when this lake was a resort.

He has had a colorful career serving as city engineer and police for 26 years until retiring in 1954. He served on the city council and was mayor for several years. He was an active member of the Red Cross and the Commercial Club. In many of the improvements of the city, he had a major part in the planning and construction of many buildings, such as the first Kingsbury County Memorial Hospital and the present Church of God. He planned the city water and sewer system and had a hand in developing the city park and playground. He was honored several years ago when the city named the park for him. One of his accomplishments was the designing and helping of the supervision in construction of the swimming pool. It was the second outdoor pool in the state.

He was a member of the Board of Education for 17



The Thorsness hardware store, Otto at right.





years and supervised the construction of the present high school.

In 1956 he was honored by being named to Who's Who in South Dakota.

His early accomplishments were the building of the city's first fire engine and making one of the first radios in the city. He devised a rain gauge and kept weather records for many years.

Otto and his wife were members of the Congregational Church and the Masonic and Eastern Star Lodges.

Their two children, Greta Kopperud, retired after thirty years of teaching school and Milton who recently retired after several years of nursing at the Yankton State Hospital. He now lives in Yankton.

The Milford Kopperuds have four boys. Richard lives in Dallas, Texas. He is an engineer for Rockwell International. He is married to Scharrel, daughter of the Herman Andersons. Robert is a building contractor in Arvada, Colo. He is married to Sharon, daughter of the Hans Andersons of Rapid City. Donald is a teacher and coach at Newell, S. D. He is married to Karen, daughter of the Quentine Andersons. John is an electrical engineer for the Boeing Co. in Seattle, Wash. He is married to Colleen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ted Rich.

## WABY FAMILY

### By Mrs. LeRoy Wienk

Rebecca Waby (better known as Grandma Waby in this community) was born May 19, 1861 in South Carlton, England to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Coulson. She was next to the youngest in the family of 13 children. When an infant she was baptized in the Episcopal Church of England.

At the age of 13 she came to the U.S. with her parents and brothers to St. Charles, Minn. In 1881 she came to S. D. and was married on Dec. 20, 1882 to Fred Waby in a double ceremony with her brother Tom who married Emma Nelson (parents of George Coulson who still lives in Lake Preston). This was the first wedding in the newly built Congregational Church which wasn't completely finished as the story goes they had to get the carpenter to open up the church for the wedding.

They started farming on their homestead northeast of Lake Preston which was the quarter west of where Lyle Johnsons live at the present time. Several of Rebecca's brothers were on homesteads in the same location. Three children were born to them on this place. Edward the oldest and then Elmer, who passed away at age 4½ and then Myrtie (Mrs. Arthur Marquardt).

In 1893 they moved to a farm they bought from George Foster which was located straight north of Lake Preston and at the present time is known as the late Arthur Marquardt residence.

In 1894 Fred Died and 3 years later Rebecca and her children moved into Lake Preston to live in what is known as the Lawson house near Hubert Jensen's gas station. Ed and Myrtie attended school in Lake Preston and seven years later they moved to Hetland where Ed worked in the bank under Henry Mauch.

Ed married Lizzie Pultz, daughter of Andrew Pultz, whose family lived where Roger Gullicksons live at the present time and they had 2 children. Lizzie died of scarlet fever when the children were real young. A few years later Ed married Rachel Brekhus of North Preston

vicinity and they continued to live in Hetland until the bank closed. They resided in Brookings after this and Ed was in the real estate business until he retired. He died in 1959. Rachel continued to make her home in Brookings until her death in 1978.

Marian, Ed's oldest daughter was a Librarian in Corvallis, Oreg., and Berkeley, Calif., for many years until she retired and lives at Scotts Valley, Calif. Merle, his son, is married and lives in Eugene, Oreg., and is an accountant in a lumber business in the city.

Myrtie started High School in Hetland but as they only had through the 10th grade she returned to Lake Preston to finish and graduated in 1909. She stayed with Mr. and Mrs. William Ford and would go home on some weekends to Hetland on the train. After graduation she worked some in the telephone office in Hetland. In 1911 she married Arthur Marquardt of Badger, S. D., where Arthur managed the Elevator there. After two years they moved to the farm north of Lake Preston where they lived the rest of their married life. Arthur died in 1973 and Myrtie lived with her son until the last few years she has made her home with her daughters. They had three children.

Vernon, their son, farmed the home place and was never married. He retired and moved into town in 1978.

Frances, the oldest daughter, married LeRoy Wienk and they still live on a farm one mile south of the home place. She and her husband were engaged in farming and Charolais Cattle until retirement a few years ago. They had 6 children and are as follows:

Arnold is married to Carol Casper and lives on the Wienk farm. They have five daughters, farm and are engaged in the Charolais cattle business. The oldest daughter is married to Al Vedvei and live on the former Marquardt place and are engaged in farming and cattle business with Arnold. Kim is going to Nursing School at Mitchell. Peg is in High School, Jody and Amy in grade school.

Allen, the second son, is married to Gloria Blote and they now live in Sioux Falls and have 3 children. He is a Fertilizer and Chemical Representative for the Cenex Co-op. Lisa, their oldest daughter, is in High School. Darla and Brian are in grade school.

Vincent married Micky Haley and lives on the former Sam Gudahl place southwest of Lake Preston. He is engaged in farming and Charolais cattle. He also does aerial crop spraying in the summer time. Micky teaches school at De Smet. They have 2 boys at home, Cody and Rusty.

Betty is the Home Economist for the Sunshine stores in Sioux Falls, Yankton and Sioux City. She is married to Jerry Fyler who works for All American Trucking Company.

Janet married John Koller and they reside at Edgemont, S. D., on a ranch. They both work at the Uranium Mine there.

Susan married Ken Everson and they live at Hayti and are engaged in farming. They have 2 boys, Jared and Kyle. Susan is a Dietetic Consultant in some hospitals and Old Folks Homes in the area.

Doris Marquardt, the youngest daughter, married Wayne Bjordahl of De Smet, son of the late Oscar Bjordahl, in 1948 and they lived in De Smet, S. D., and then moved to Dell Rapids where Wayne ran the Lumber Yard and also was a carpenter. They have 5 children. At present Wayne is the Operations Manager of the Jordan





Millwork in the Sioux Falls plant.

Nancy, their oldest, is married to Harry Kringen and have one son Chris. They are farming in the Dell Rapids area.

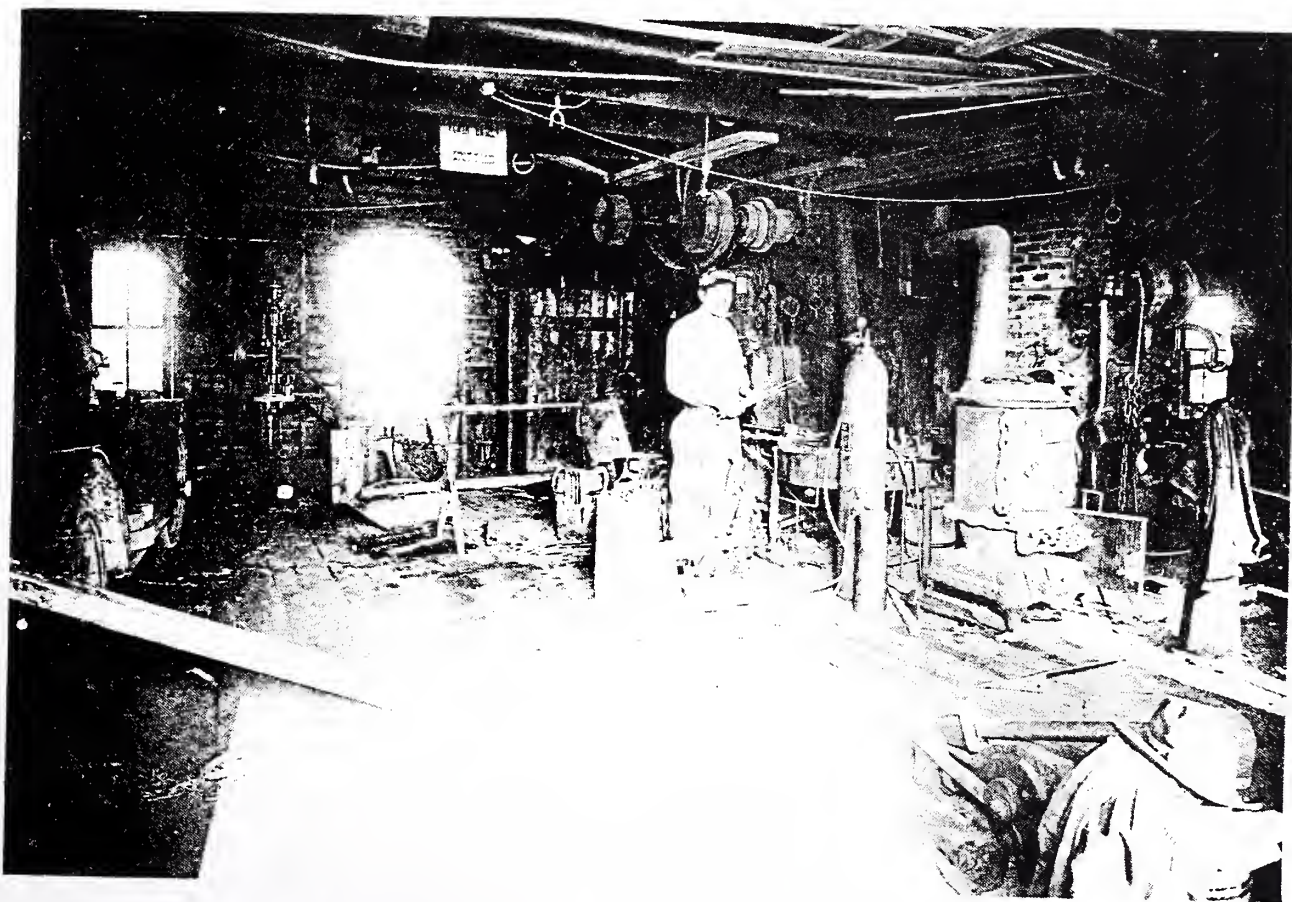
Alden (not married) lives in Dell Rapids and does shingling work.

Gale (not married) lives in Dell Rapids and works at Ravens in Sioux Falls.

Pam (not married) lives in Dell Rapids and has a Flower Shop.

Barry is 12 years old and is in the 7th grade.

## More Than 70 Years in Blacksmithing



This picture of one of, perhaps, the longest single-proprietor businesses in the community's history appears out of alphabetical order because it came to us late. All pages were made up ready for the press, but we were fortunate in that there was room on this final page of the booklet.

This picture, made between 1918 and 1920, is of Nels J. Stevens in his blacksmith shop. Nels at that time was over 40-42 years old, and had been in the blacksmith trade nearly a generation—having started as an apprentice in Denmark when he was 11.

Nels continued active in his smithy until retiring at age 83.

His son Robert, who provided us this picture, identifies some of the equipment visible: horse hobbles, drill press, disc sharpener, and the line shaft which extended across two rooms, as well as the triangular horse shoeing box.

Robert reports his father started with a fire, anvil and hammer and made most of the rest of his tools, such as tongs, screw drivers, etc.

He also notes the sign "spot cash" hardly applied in the '30s, when eggs, pigs, chickens and even a Jersey cow were accepted in settlement of accounts.





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